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BLANCO IN THE USA

By John Economos

Raul Blanco, Australia's 2000 Olympic Games coach, quietly slipped out of Sydney last week as he caught his flight bound for the USA on an important Olympic mission.

With less than five months before the curtain lifts on the Sydney Olympics, Blanco has been zipping around the globe, furiously collating the latest data on every possible opponent that he may have to encounter come, September.

Australia first match, (opposing nation yet unknown), will be played at the M.C.G. in Melbourne on September 13th, 48 hours before the Opening Ceremony officially ignites the 2000 Games back in Sydney.

Last night ABSW finally tracked Blanco down at his hotel in Philadelphia - Pennsylvania.

Since late last week the Australian Olympic coach has based himself in Philadelphia to closely monitor the Olympic qualifying finals of CONCACAF.

This Olympic play-off tournament that currently is in progress at the Hershey Park Stadium, involves the six nations of Canada, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and the USA.

The top two nations from this tournament which finishes this Saturday (a.e.s.t.), will travel to Sydney come

September for the Games.

"To date I believe that the USA team has impressed the most."

"However having said this, I have been assured here that the team to watch out for is Mexico," Blanco stated to us late last night.



Raul Blanco: Olympic coach.

"I saw the USA beat Honduras 3-0, but to be truthful the scoreline flattered the American team a little."

Continued on page 2



Adelaide City's March Continues

Adelaide City's ace marksman Damian Mori in "full steam ahead" mode as City charge towards an eleventh consecutive finals campaign.

SBS FROZEN OUT

By Bert van Bedaf

Australia's Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) claims it was not given adequate opportunity to counter-bid for the national soccer broadcasting rights.

Under then former chairman David Hill's Soccer Australia management, the

rights went to commercial network Channel Seven for \$25 million over 10 years two years ago.

This is a figure SBS Soccer supremo and Head of Sport Les Murray claims is much lower than the figure SBS was quoted as part of their "first option clause" on the rights.

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BLANCO IN THE USA

Continued from front page

"By the middle of this week I should
have a far better idea of which two nations
will be heading to Sydney in September.

"Right now though everyone is talking
very highly about Mexico over here," con-
veyed Blanco.

Prior to his departure for the USA,
Blanco has closely been watching many of
his Olympic squad members playing in
the NSL.

He has been especially pleased this sea-
son by the vast improvement in form of
his powerful right midfield flanker, Brett
Emerton at Sydney Olympic.

However Blanco is still vitally con-
cerned with as yet not having some more
urgently needed warm up games fixed in
place.

"We had pencilled in a four nations
tournament to be played in June, but we
would have experienced further and on-
going difficulties with our Euro-based
players that would have been still
involved in European competitions with
their respective clubs.

"The same would have been the case
with at least eight players from the NSL
that could be still involved with the Top
Six Series.

"So it's been necessary to move any
planned warm-up games to a later date,
say like in August.



Brett Emerton: Olyroo skipper.

"To be honest, there is no real time that
is the right time to be able to please every-
one," underlined Blanco.

"By law (F.I.F.A.) all players compet-
ing with their respective nations at the
coming Olympics, must be released prior
to the Games by at least September 3rd,"
Blanco confirmed.

The Australian Olympic coach is
expected to return to Sydney next
Wednesday.

Bush Soccer scores with Hahn

In a major boost for the develop-
ment of soccer in country New
South Wales, the NSW Soccer
Federation announced that the
Central West Soccer League is to be
sponsored by Hahn Premium.

To be known as the Hahn Premium
Central West Soccer League, Hahn's
support will help eight clubs in Orange,
Bathurst, Dubbo and Lithgow.

"We are delighted with this support of
one of our country competitions," said
the President of NSW Soccer
Federation, Mr Peter Gray.

"The Federation has long been con-
cerned to ensure that young people and
adults who like to play soccer have a
good level of competition in which to
compete, not only for their own enjoy-
ment but also because you just never
know where the next Harry Kewell
might come from!"

The Central West Soccer League
competition started in 1994 and includes

competitions at three levels — first
grade, reserve grade and Under 18s.

"The Hahn Premium support will not
only assist the direct running of the
League, but also provide added incentive
for junior players," said Mr Bruce
Rooke, Secretary of the Central West
League.

"Knowing that a company as high
profile as Hahn is willing to support soc-
cer in the country is an investment in the
future of the game and in our region,"
Mr Rooke added.

The clubs involved in the Hahn
Premium Central West Soccer League
are Orange Waratah, Orange Cymns and
Canobolas Rangers from Orange;
Bathurst '75 and Bathurst City Red
Taps; East Dubbo United and Orana
Spurs from Dubbo; and Lithgow City
Rangers from Lithgow.

The Hahn Premium Central West
Soccer League kicked-off its 2000 com-
petition last weekend.



Peter Gray: Delighted.

TALKING WITH MR ED

Another busy week in football and a
long weekend to boot meant an even
extra dosage of the world game. A per-
fect long weekend of football for those of
us who just can't get enough.

After the recent ABC-NSL/cooking
show debacle and the lack of cover-
age on the Seven Network (covered by
ABSW in recent weeks) it has shocked
me to hear that our Soccer Broadcasting
Station (SBS) was virtually pushed out
the door before they even had a chance.
(see page 7). The old boys network has
really cost the football loving public in
this country and now we find out that the
only TV Station with any true passion for
the sport never had a chance. There are
some who should hang their heads in
shame.

We called it on the front page some
weeks back and I've said it in this
column, watch out for Matic's men. Only
two points out of the six after round 31. It
looks like they might just sneak in. I wait
with bated breath!

Another year, and another title for
Manchester United (see page 23).
Not that I don't like United because you
have to respect a class outfit with so
many class players. But, I guess like
most I'm just getting a little sick and tired
of seeing them win all the time. (I'm
going to get a truck load of letters from
United fans now pretty upset at me!) I
think I would just like to see someone
give them a real test. I mean six titles in
eight years is one mean feat.

To add to that they've just bought
Ruud van Nistelrooy (see page 29) for
over \$50 million. I mean where will he
play when you have Andy Cole, Dwight
Yorke and Ole Gunnar Solksjaer coming
off the bench. No wonder Teddy
Sheringham is yet to re-sign!

Three out of Four for Spain in the
Champions League. What an amaz-
ing performance by the Spanish Clubs to
secure three semi-final births in the
Champions League (see pages 24 & 25).
Congratulations to Barcelona, Real
Madrid and surprise packet Valencia.
Unfortunately for my Spanish friends I
am still tipping Bayern Munich for the
title. Any team that doesn't have the
complete burning desire to win it after
going so agonisingly close last year sim-
ply doesn't deserve it. I think the
Germans have that desire.

I was really unhappy to see our very
own Harry Kewell sent off in the
UEFA Cup semi-final loss to
Galatasaray during the week (see page
29). If it was warranted I could have
accepted it, but what a dreadful decision
by the man in the middle. He ruined a
perfectly good game (or what could've
been) and caused many a wasted broken
sleep for many of us on this side of the
world.

Journo's are always first to criticise ref-
ereeing performances but I guess in
some countries referees like to hit back -
and with some bruising consequences
(see page 27).

And finally, it is a real pleasure to see
a real gentleman of the NSL back in
business - in more ways than one. Well
done 'Chi Chi' Mendez, for the fightback
from another knee injury and for the
Amazing Easter present you gave the
Sydney Olympic fans last Saturday
night. All lovers of the game wish you
complete fitness for the rest of your
career. Well Done!!

Ed

COSMOS REMEMBER ANZAC SPIRIT

By Graham Cooke

The Anzac spirit will be remem-
bered at Bruce Stadium today
(Tuesday) when the Auckland
Kingz travel the Tasman to play
Canberra Cosmos.

There will be a special curtain-raiser
in which the Canberra Rockets repre-
sentative side, drawn from players in the
ACT Premiership, will play the Turkish
All Stars, comprising Turkish-
Australians from Sydney and
Melbourne.

This game will be played for the
Anzac Cup, donated by the Turkish
Ambassador in Canberra. The New
Zealand High Commissioner and repre-

sentatives of the Turkish Embassy will
be present.

The squads are: Canberra Rockets,
Anthony Giannasca, Ian Jeffries, Jason
Dunn, Oscar Zamora, Steve Lazzari,
Neil Stoddart, Jimmy Baxter, Danny
Macor, Scott Manson, John Nelson, Lee
Pietrukowski, Elliott Zwangobani, Luka
Ujdur, John Rakic, Njegosh Popovich,
Darryl North, Mark Conlon.

Turkish All Stars: Mustafa Mustafa,
Serdar Pir, Ozgur Duman, Aytac
Yilmaz, Volkan Ilhan, Levent Misokka,
Salih Sozer, Ismail Cilek, Serhat Hulusi,
Ramadan Osman, Srtunc Kaya, Serdar
Yilmam, Fatih Yetismis, Murat Sevin,
Ahmet Uyanik, Sertan Kocdeviren,
Hatdar Asian, Mustafa Kadayifei, Cenk
Elgun, Yucel Cetinay, Ergun Semerci.

BILL TURNER CUP

ROUND 1

Manly 6 Beacon Hill 1, Grafton 3
South Grafton 1, Catherine McCauley 8
Maclean 0, Lambton 4 San Clemente 0,
St Phillips 3 Hunter Christian 1, Belmont
3 Hunter Sports 2, West Wallsend 5
Macquarie College 0, Terrigal 4
Kincumber 0, St Edwards Gosford 6 The
Entrance 0, Umina 5 Lisarow 1, Henry
Kendall 2 St Peters Tuggerah 1, Narara
Valley 5 Gosford Christian 0, Berkeley
Vale 3 Erina 0, Gorokan 1 Northlakes 0,

Woy Woy 4 Gosford 2, Daramalan
College 3 Canberra 0, Wanniasa 3 St
Edmunds 2, Caroline Christolm 3
Goulburn 0, Calwell 5 Stromlo 2,
Radford College 9 Yass 0, St Francis
Xavier 8 Mulwaree 0, Belconnen 7
Trinity Christian 1, McKillop 4 St Pats
Goulburn 1, Tullamore Central 6
Tottenham Central 1, Delroy 4 James
Sheehan 1, Orange 6 Canobolas 1,
Warilla 4 Woonona 3, Edmund Rice 8
Dapto 1, Vincentia 5 Ulladulla 1.

MAGIC MENDEZ IS BACK

By John Economos

Gabriel ('Chi Chi') Mendez, Sydney Olympic's magical midfield playmaker, made a dramatic, and much earlier than expected, comeback last Saturday night for the former League leaders.

The magic of Mendez's midfield wizardry, missing from Olympic's midfield since March 12th, was back, and back in a big way as he lifted Olympic to its first win after a drought in their last five games.

On Easter Saturday night Mendez resurrected Olympic's Top Six hopes as he came on in the second session to almost immediately inject into his side flair, direction, superb skills plus a goal to boot that proved far too much to handle for the Parramatta Power.

For the fourth cruel time in the space of seven years, Mendez had sustained a crippling knee injury that at first threatened him with going under the knife for the fourth time.



Gabriel ('Chi Chi') Mendez: Olympic's playmaking king is back in action.

Most fortunately, initial diagnoses proved totally wrong and over the past six weeks 'Chi Chi' tenaciously worked off the pitch on his injured knee to get himself back into action last Saturday night.

He's unexpected return to Soccer this season has been more than a blessing for Olympic.

Since Mendez was out injured, it was no coincidence that Olympic after having led the League for 16 consecutive weeks, suddenly plunged down the ladder and in fact appeared lucky to remain in the Top Six.

In frantic desperation, Olympic's coach Branko Culina sent out an S.O.S. to playmaker Kresimir Marusic in Belgium to come back to Australia.

But it seems that Kresimir for the moment cannot do the job for Olympic.

Despite lacking match fitness, Mendez still looked terrific last Saturday night at Belmore Sports Ground as he sparked life and enterprise into Olympic almost immediately from the moment he came on.

NSL CLUB IN-FIGHTING SET TO LOSE IT MAJOR SPONSOR

By John Economos

An NSL club is without doubt, about to lose its major sponsor for next season through a piece of great stupidity, not to mention anything else.

The Club in question is split into two factions at 'management' level.

The minor faction, in a display of flexing its muscle, had decided to sue the previous management group of the Club.

However within that group was included the head man and instigator of the Major Sponsoring body.

This major sponsor has been sponsoring the Club for the past four years.

The major sponsorship monies involved is

believed to be worth around the \$175,000 mark.

Expert 'legal advice' has lead the management group to sue a member of the major sponsor.

The ludicrous political in-fighting that has manifested within the Club in recent months, will surely prove costly.

Already there have been two totally unnecessary court hearings with legal fees spiralling over the \$50,000 mark.

For what? Just to feed someone's ego.

And these people are handling Australian Soccer's destiny?

Standby for a major break out in the general daily media.



Anzac Day Soccer Frenzy

Don't miss these **3** great games of soccer

Parramatta Power v Wollongong Wolves

Tuesday, 25th April (Anzac Day Holiday)
at the "Powerhouse"
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3.30pm Parramatta Eagles v Penrith Panthers
5.30pm Blacktown City v Leichhardt Tigers
7.30pm Power v Wolves Match

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

TOMMY SERMANI, the Canberra Cosmos' coach has been appointed by SOCOG as Technical Operations Manager at the Bruce Stadium, Canberra for the upcoming Olympic Games.

The Bruce Stadium has been selected as one of the venues to stage no less than 11 of the Sydney Olympics Soccer games.

Sermanni stated to 'Good Oil': "The operation is massive.

"There is something like almost 1,100 people involved during the Games at the Bruce Stadium, including security, technical people, marketing, stewards, staff at all training grounds etc.

"It's going to be bigger than Ben Hur.

"I wish some of them would come to our NSL games," the affable and always smiling Scot joked.

There will be something of a 'dress rehearsal' at tonight's Cosmos home match against the Auckland Kingz.

rocket that laid the foundations for Marconi to scramble away from certain defeat and win the action-packed match that has now lifted them to second spot on the League ladder.

And what did the 'Brazilian Renaud' have to say about the goal?

"Well I've been mucking around at training with it for a couple of months but I couldn't see it clearly in the game.

"I'll have to wait till I see it on television, I hope."

ANGIE APOSTECOGLOU, South Melbourne's League champion winning coach over the past two seasons, now looks almost certain to be parting company with the Club that he has served so extremely well over the past 15 years as a player, assistant coach and finally as the senior coach.

No, Souths are not about to sack the NSL's youngest (34 years old) coach.

Soccer Australia is expected to very soon

has been handling himself and his squads over the past few years.

"He's impressed me even more this season, especially when many things have not been going well for him with Souths having been over-



By John Economos



Angie Apostecoglou: Soon to be installed the new Youth coach of Australia.

committed with not only the NSL but with FIFA's World Club Championships last January in Brazil.

"Angie is the League's youngest coach and through it all has come through it with flying colours I believe," ended the very experienced 59 year old coach.

ADELAIDE CITY was Amooted only by ABSW some five weeks ago as being most likely to make a very late bolt and crash their way belatedly into the Top Six Series.

their berth in the Top Six come 6.30pm Sunday May 7th, look out for Zoran Matic's men.

Almost by stealth, the 'Black and Whites' over the past two months have silently climbed the ladder to now loom as almost definite finals contenders.

There is no more humble, or harder coach in the League, than the man steering the 'Aristocrats' from South Australia than Matic.

With Matic, failure is very rarely accepted as an option.



Zoran Matic: Coach of the 'Black and Whites'.

Last weekend the 'Black and Whites' tossed the Auckland Kingz 0-2 and tonight (Tuesday) at the remodelled Hindmarsh Stadium, take on the visiting Gippsland Falcons.

On Sunday Adelaide City travels to Sydney to play third-placed Marconi at the Marconi Stadium and on Sunday week in the last round of the League, play hosts to the Melbourne Knights.

Should the 'Black and Whites' ultimately cement

PERTH GLORY last Friday night against Marconi looked like their normal selves as they threatened to annihilate Marconi in the first session.

Despite missing Troy Halpin (out injured for rest of season) and with brilliant dead-ball taker Con Boutsianis in England with Bolton Wanderers, the Glory led Marconi at the break 0-2 and it easily could have been 0-4.

Only through two



Bernd Stange: The Glory's astute and highly experienced German coach.

miraculous and world class second half goals (Chad Gibson and Brendan Renaud) created Marconi's dramatic comeback to win 3-2.

A word of warning. Do not write off the Glory during the coming Top Six Series.

They, plus Marconi, are the teams to beat.

In Bernd Stange, the Glory has a most methodical and astute coach and has done wonders to date in covering the huge gaps left behind by Halpin and Boutsianis.

Tonight the Glory take on visiting Sydney Olympic in Perth.

SOUTH MELBOURNE will not have to look far for a new coach for next season should their incumbent man Angie Apostecoglou be upgraded this week by Soccer Australia to takeover the Australian Under 17s and Youth squads.

Highly favoured to come in and take over the coaching reins at Souths is former Souths international midfielder-cum-defender Alan Davidson.

The very experienced Davidson after retiring from Souths some 10 years ago, went to play for Pahang in the Malaysian National Soccer League for almost six years.

The extremely skilled Davidson was spotted by



Alan Davidson: A leading candidate for the Souths coaching position.

Saso Petrovski scored a goal in each half against the Brisbane Strikers to lift Wollongong's tally for the season to 69 goals and with three rounds still left to play.

What makes Wollongong's feat all that more impressive is that Petrovski is not the Wolves ace-scorer.

The League leaders have a stack of lethal marksmen in Stuart Young, Scott Chipperfield, Esala Masi plus Petrovski.

Petrovski, the former Melita Eagles striker joined the Wolves two seasons ago from the NSW



Andrew Crews: The Power's towering goalkeeper.

Nottingham Forest's coaching staff when Forest toured Australia in the mid 80s and offered him a contract which Davidson took up to play in England.

Also favoured for the Souths position is the current industrious midfielder David Clarkson.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES last Saturday night broke the 18-year-old goal scoring record in the NSL that had previously been set by Eddie Thomson's 1982

Super League. Wollongong tonight (Tuesday) are away to the Parramatta Power at the Parramatta Stadium.

PARRAMATTA, the sprawling outer western suburb region has no less than 5,000 Juniors playing Rugby League?

So what? Well at the same time the Parramatta area has no less than 37,000 Juniors playing SOCCER.

That's what.

.....



Saso Petrovski: Smashes League record for the Wolves.

Sydney City team. Sydney City in that year racked up a monumental 68 goals.

However last Saturday night Wollongong's striker

ANDY HARPER, the Newcastle Breakers' magnificently intelligent striker, last Saturday night played his 300th match in the NSL in the scoreless



Tommy Sermanni: Appointed as Olympics Technical Operations Manager.

BRENDAN RENAUD, Marconi's vastly improved left wingback over the past two years, scored what was possibly the season's best ever goal last Friday night at the Marconi Stadium.

It was Renaud's 'Brazilian styled' left-footed

officially announce the new coach for the Australian Youth and Under 17s squads and Postecoglou is leading the punters' choice.

A very high profiled and former NSL coach stated to 'Good Oil' last night:

"I've been extremely impressed by how Angie



Brendan Renaud: Marconi's 'Roberto Carlos'.

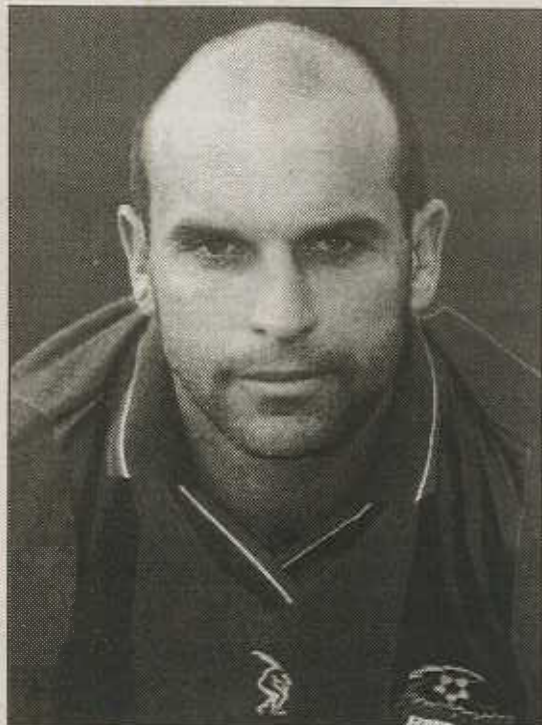
The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

draw against the visiting Carlton at the Breakers' Stadium.

This most astute thinker has played a vital role in lifting his mobile strike-partner Johnny Buonavoglia into the leading goalscorers' stakes, let alone Newcastle's historic lift into the Top Six bracket in the NSL.

Some 6,000 Newcastle fans fronted up on Saturday night as well as national coach Frank Farina to salute Big Andy.

The Breakers again will be at home this Friday against current League champions South Melbourne, whilst tonight (Tuesday) they travel down to Sydney to play Sydney



Andy Harper: The Breakers' invaluable striker.



Scott Thomas: Olympic's new sweeper.

United at the United Sports Centre.

SCOTTY THOMAS, Sydney Olympic's nuggety big hearted midfielder, last Saturday night had to really roll up his sleeves in his willing endeavour to help out coach Branko Culina.

Olympic for their home clash against the Parramatta Power, and left without experienced defenders such as Scott Baillie, Ante Juric and Chris Zoricich, all out of action through injuries or suspension, were left with no sweeper.

Little Scotty stepped up



Robbie Trajkovski: Glory's excellent right wingback.



By John Economos

and took 'the broom' for the first time and played one of the games of his life.

What a soldier.

They really breed them tough up at Newcastle.

PERTH GLORY's home match today (Tuesday) will kick off their main game against Sydney Olympic at 3pm local time.

ANZAC DAY (Tuesday-today) will almost certainly spell 'death' and possibly 'life' to a couple of teams wanting to make the Top Six come May 7th.

For after tonight's full round of matches, Adelaide City, the Auckland Kingz and possibly Carlton, could 'die' as far as doing the business in this season's Top Six is concerned.

Only Carlton is barely in sixth spot with 49 League points and today face current League champions South Melbourne at home.

Adelaide City must also win at home against the well organised Gippsland Falcons who last weekend beat the Melbourne Knights 3-2.

Wynton

Rufer's

Auckland Kingz travel today to Canberra with also a 'Must Win' situation for their slim mathematical hope of qualifying.



Wynton Rufer: The Auckland Kingz' 37-year-old magnificent player/coach.

MARCONI STALLIONS

V

ADELAIDE FORCE

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KICK OFF 6.30PM

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VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

RAIDERS IN THE DARK

By Bert van Bedaf

The City of Whittlesea, at Melbourne's northern outskirts, suffered major embarrassment last Monday night, when the floodlights at Epping stadium went out and the Victorian Premier League match between home team Melbourne Raiders and St Albans Saints had to be abandoned.

The match was replayed last Thursday night after the power had been restored. The Saints beat the Epping side 4-1, climbing to third place halfway through the VPL season. The Raiders are finding themselves pretty much in the dark, being close to the relegation zone.

Epping stadium is one of six local venues to be used as a training ground in September during the Olympic 2000 soccer tournament, part of which will be held in Melbourne, including women and men's finals matches.

The power failure was a serious set-back to Epping's choice as an ideal Olympic training venue.

"All the power went out. We had technical people looking at it and we've fixed it quickly," Rob Ewart, the City of Whittlesea's Arts and Leisure manager, said.

Ewart was conscious of the fact that a similar failure would cause severe problems, if it happened during the Olympics.

"That was not far from my mind," Ewart said. "Something's gone wrong, but we've fixed it, so it won't happen again," he said.

Twenty minutes into the match, the stadium was shrouded in darkness when power failure caused all lights at the stadium to go out.

Council technicians were called in to find the fault and turn the lights back on. The stadium

switchboard was checked as was electrical equipment outside, but what caused the lights to dim remained a mystery and referee Cain Naumcevski abandoned the match, with the score still at 0-0. The power was restored by mid-week.

"Everything was going well. We had a top crowd (of around 1000 spectators). We had lots of kids with their parents. We were about 20 min-



Geoff Miles: Confident.



utes into the game when, 'boom', the lights went out and everything went dark, but only at the stadium. The RSL did have light," a disappointed Raiders president Joe Caruso said.

Caruso believed lost revenue and costs to the club would run into thousands of dollars.

"Financially, this will be a big loss to us. We still need to pay the referee and the security people. All the food had to be thrown out," Caruso said.

VSF chief executive, Geoff Miles, who is also the competition manager of Olympic football Melbourne, expressed confidence in Epping stadium.

"Epping stadium is a first class Olympic training venue. We don't know what the problem was, but I have confidence in the council that whatever it was has been rectified," Miles said.

In the other Monday night match, Heidelberg United beat Altona Magic 1-0. It didn't get the Bergers off the bottom of the table, but it has put them joint on 10 points with Fawkner.

SIX-A-SIDE TO BE REGULAR CURTAIN RAISER FOR ACT

By Graham Cooke

A \$38,000 six-a-side tournament, to be played in Canberra in September, could become a regular curtain-raiser to the NSL season, its organiser believes.

Ian Shaw, of I and R Sporting Promotions, plans the event to lead into an international competition, featuring the winners of similar tournaments throughout Asia.

"We want this for Canberra — we think it is the best venue," he said. "The aim is to give spectators plenty of excitement." Shaw said all NSL teams had been invited. "It should

benefit them in their pre-season warm-ups," he said. "Two entries a club will be permitted, so each team can bring its entire squad here."

If the planned entry of 32 teams is not reached, Shaw will extend the invitation to NSW Superleague sides which will be preparing for their inaugural summer season.

"I have spoken to Soccer Australia and they are enthusiastic. The dates are September 8 to 10, Asia, which is just

before the Olympics, so we should be able to benefit from the excitement and anticipation which is going to around then."



SOUTH AUSTRALIA PREMIER LEAGUE

SOUTHERN DERBY BRINGS RED EXPLOSION

By Allan Crisp

The meeting of 1998 Premiers Birkalla and reigning premier Cumberland resembled a battle field when the southern areas rivals clashed at Camden Reserve last Saturday.

The Foxes were reduced to eight men in the second half after Nick Mitchell, Matt Peace and Brad Armour were red carded by referee Keith Bruce-Gordon.

Defender Mitchell was the first player to be marched for a crunching foul and goalkeeper Peace followed to the dressing rooms after he flattened Birkalla striker, Joe Rechichi.

Those bad tempered dramas sparked a fist swinging melee close to the grandstand touchline, a punch-up which left three Birkalla players grounded, clutching their heads.

After the dust settled, former Adelaide City midfielder Armour was chosen as the worst offender and also was sent off.

Cumberland coach David Leane then made a hasty change, sacrificing field player Ben Schmidt to bring on his reserve goalkeeper Peter Kourkoulis to replace Peace.

Birks snatched the lead two minutes before half time when there was a full quorum of players as Romeo Lauriello snared a close-range goal after Peace fumbled a high ball.

Industrious substitute Dustie McGregor grabbed the second goal when Birks had the numerical advantage and was able to raid the Foxes goal with a barrage of shots from all conceivable angles.

There was less frenetic action at Pirate Park

where league leaders Blue Eagles threw aside memories of last week's first loss of the season to down Port Lion 4-1.

Prolific scorer Michael Brooks netted a brace to head the Eagles revival against the Pirates, who walked the premiership plank from second to fourth.

Rocky Aloisi tossed a seven-match losing monkey off his Raider's backs with a 3-0 success against newcomers Metro Stars.

The inevitable breakthrough sent Mario Boffa's Metro Stars crashing to the bottom of the Premier League galaxy.

Modbury Jets continued to impress with a solid 3-2 victory over troubled Elizabeth City at Golden Grove.

Talented, but inconsistent Adelaide Zebras captured the Easter spoils from White City with a 3-1 triumph at Newton Sports Field where Robbie Saraceno and Scott Tunbridge and were the net busters.

Jamie Perin, Tosh Deptula and Rick Piotrowski were Croydon King's ringleaders in their home success over Campbelltown City.

Premier League Results

Modbury Jets 3 (Trimboli, Donovan, Isaacson) Elizabeth Rams 2 (Westervelt, Kidd). Best — Modbury: Donovan, Doran, Blefari; Elizabeth: Goulding, Robertson, Westervelt.

Metro Stars 0 Raiders 3. (Bralic, Karettevlis, Georgiou). Best — Metro Stars: Fontanarosa, Seri, Moore; Raiders: Bralic, Zilic, Haralabakis.

Adelaide Zebras 3 (Saraceno 2, Tunbridge) White City 1 (Plunkett). Best — Zebras: Tunbridge, Romanowicz, Budin; White City: Plunkett, D. Stam,

Williams.

Birkalla 2 (Lauriello, McGregor) Cumberland Foxes 0. Best — Birkalla: Keens, Plummer, Wilkinson; Foxes: Walczynski, Leane, Fowler.

Croydon Kings 4 (J. Porter 2, Deptula 2) Campbelltown Red Devils 0. Best — Croydon Kings: Perin, Deptula, Piotrowski; red Devils: Beltrame, Caputo, Chitti.

Port Lion Pirates 1 (Calabria) Blue Eagles 4 (Brooks 2, Sergi, Cutillo). Best — Port Lion: DeGiovannello, Calabria, Tsonis; Blue Eagles: Sergi, Brooks, Cutillo.

State League Results

Para Hills Knights 4, Salisbury Apaches 1; Panthers 1, Estern Strikers 2; Port Pirie City 2, Adelaide Hills 0; Noarlunga Bulldogs 2, Seaford

Surfers 0; Olympic FC 2, Northern Demons 0; Cobras 5, Enfield Falcons 2.

Round 11 — Premier League

Friday, April 28 — Modbury Jets v Metro Stars. Saturday, April 29 — Blue Eagles v Elizabeth City; Campbelltown Red Devils v Port Lion Pirates; Cumberland Foxes v Croydon Kings; White City Warriors v Birkalla; Raiders v Adelaide Zebras.

Round 11 — State League

Saturday, April 29 — Para Hills v Enfield Falcons; Northern Demons v Cobras; Seaford Surfers v Olympic; Hills v Noarlunga Bulldogs; Western Strikers v Port Pirie City; Salisbury Apaches v Panthers.

SA PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Adelaide Blue Eagles	10	8	1	1	30	6	25
Croydon Kings	10	7	0	3	25	10	21
Modbury Jets	10	7	0	3	14	12	21
Port Lion Pirates	10	6	1	3	21	13	19
Elizabeth City	10	4	2	4	19	15	14
Adelaide City	10	4	2	4	16	16	14
Campbelltown City	10	4	1	5	16	21	13
White City Warriors	10	3	1	6	6	13	10
Cumberland United	10	3	1	6	8	17	10
Raiders	10	2	3	5	12	25	9
Metro Stars	10	2	2	6	12	25	8

★★★ SPECIAL FEATURE ★★★

HOW SBS WAS FROZEN OUT



By Bert van Bedaf

Australia's Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) claims it was not given adequate opportunity to counter-bid for the national soccer broadcasting rights, which went to commercial network Channel Seven for \$25 million over 10 years two years ago.

SBS's head of sport and soccer supremo Les Murray reveals in documents obtained by ABSW that Soccer Australia's management, then under former chairman David Hill, demanded a much larger tender from SBS than that it settled for with Channel Seven to "freeze" SBS out of further negotiations.

"Soccer Australia agreed to a fee with (Channel) Seven, which is \$8 million per year less than what it sought from SBS," Murray stated.

"We don't believe the Soccer Australia management of the time gave SBS a reasonable opportunity to tender for the free to air rights, although it did act within its legal obligations."

"Under the terms of the previous rights agreement, SBS had the right of first option to renew. In December of 1997, six

months before the contract was to expire, SBS expressed to Soccer Australia its desire to exercise that option and renew (the contract). "Soccer Australia responded with a willingness to renew, but at a

licence fee of \$42 million over four years, which represented a 3000 per cent increase on the terms of the previous contract.

"This was, we believe, a ploy to freeze SBS out of subsequent negotiations and to neutralise the first option clause."

"SBS responded with a



letter saying it considered the quoted rights fees inappropriate, but that it remained confident that through further discussion a mutually acceptable rights fee could be arrived at.

"SBS did not hear back from Soccer Australia until it received a letter on 13 August, 1998, informing us that a rights agreement had been reached with Network Seven."

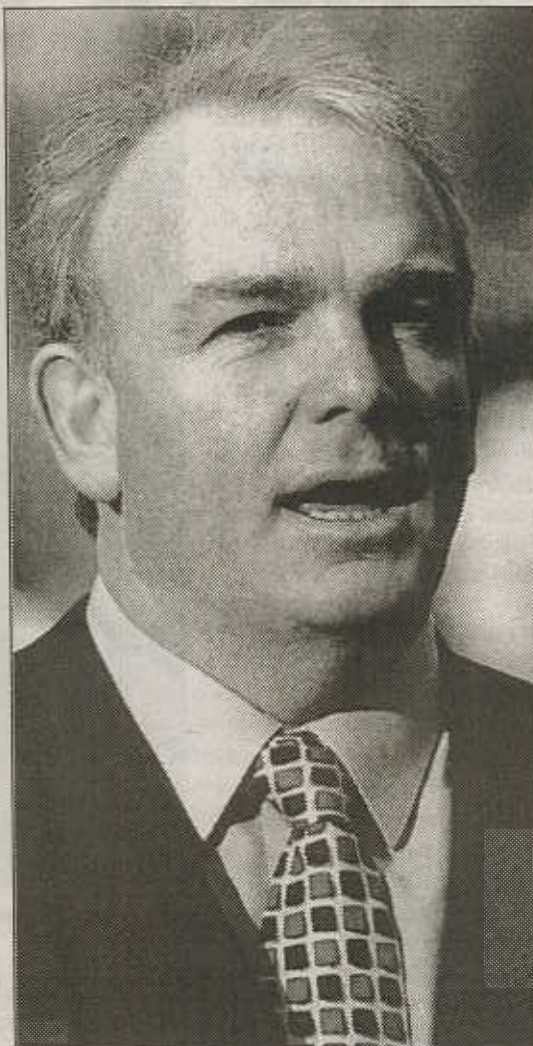
"The rights agreement has been publicised as being worth \$25 million over 10 years, considerably less than what Soccer Australia sought from SBS. The Seven agreement represents a fee of \$2.5 million per year, while the fee sought from SBS was \$10.5 million per year," Murray stated.

As a result of the deal, SBS lost the rights to broadcast the NSL and matches played in Australia of the Joeys, Young Socceroos, Olyroos and Socceroos. It only holds the broadcasting rights to the Matildas, Australia's national women's team.

"Games on Australian soil by all male representative teams are with the Seven Network," Murray

stated.

stated.



David Hill: Unreasonable demands.

stated.

The ABC holds the sub-licence to NSL matches. SBS continues to broadcast its popular "On The Ball" program,

which "does not involve rights to action vision", according to the documents.



STANMORE HAWKS SOCCER CLUB COACH WANTED FIRST GRADE

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Enquiries

S. Economides

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Les Murray: Frozen out.

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ADELAIDE Omega Foods

33 Adam St, Hindmarsh S.A. 5067 Fax: (08) 8346 3144

TOWARDS SYDNEY 2000

AT A GLANCE ...

Full Name: Kosta Salapasis
Club: S.D. Compostela - Spain
Date Of Birth: 1st July 1978
Left or right footed? Right
Eye Colour: Brown
Hair Colour: Brown
Height: 178cm
Weight: 72 kg
Positions Played: Striker

THE STATS & FACTS

LG Under-23 Appearances: 7
(Vs Country)
LG Under-23 Goals (Vs Country): 0
National Representative Honours (other):
U/20 - 1997 World Youth Cup finals (Malaysia)
Number of Seasons with current Club: 2nd
Clubs Played For (current first): Compostela,
Wollongong Wolves (NSL), Adelaide City (NSL)
Junior Clubs: Adelaide City, West Adelaide
Age I started playing soccer: 1

THE LOOK FORWARD ...

Career Highlight to date: Scoring 4 goals
against Argentina in the World Youth Cup in
Malaysia
Biggest Achievement to date: Playing in the
World Youth Cup
Ambition: To win a major trophy or
Championship
Words of Advice: "Work hard."
Best advice Received: My current team-mate
Romano Sion is always giving me lots of good
advice.

PERSONALITY

Favourite Actor: Denzel Washington
Favourite Actress: Sharon Stone
Name your Top 3 Movies:
The Fugitive
Casino
Predator
Favourite Comedian:
Eddie Murphy
If you could be a character from any movie,
who would you be? Arnold Schwarzenegger,
from any of his movies really.
Best ever concert: (who, where, when?)
George Michael
Favourite Food: Dolmatoes (Greek dish)
Favourite Drink (non alcoholic): Coke
Favourite Drink (alcoholic): Martini
Favourite TV Show: Euro Goals
Invite 6 people, living or dead to a dinner
party, who would you invite?:
Bruce Willis
Anna Kournikova
Madonna
Marcello Lippi
Greg Hagias
Marco Van Basten

THE PEERS

Favourite Overseas Player: Clarence Seedorf
Favourite Overseas Team: Juventus
Most Admired Australian (based local)
Bradley Hassell
Most Admired Australian (based OS)
Billy Damianos
Most Admired Defender: Alex Tobin and
Milan Ivanovic
Most Admired Midfielder: Fernando Redondo
Most Admired Striker: Nicolas Anelka
Most Admired Goalkeeper: Angelo Peruzzi
Hardest Opponent (player): Nick Orlic
Hardest Opponent (team): South Melbourne
Dream choice of which world league? Italian
Most admired Sportsman: Michael Jordan
and Ivan Lendl

Olympic file #13

KOSTA SALAPASIDIS

Q: How do you think Sydney 2000 could change your life ... and the profile of Australian Soccer?

A: I think the experience of playing at an Olympic games, particularly one based at home, is something that could change everyone's life, and I don't think I'm any exception. Hopefully the team will do well, and as a result of that, we could continue lifting the profile and reputation of Australian soccer.

Q: Why will the LG Under-23s perform well at Sydney 2000?

A: I think Australia will perform well because we have a lot of talented players, but I suppose having said that, so do a lot of other countries. The Olympic Soccer Tournament is constantly getting bigger and more important, and all nations will be bringing their best teams — so overall, it will give Australians the chance to see some of the best soccer in the world, up against Australia, without having to travel too far.

Q: What inspires you?

A: Success.

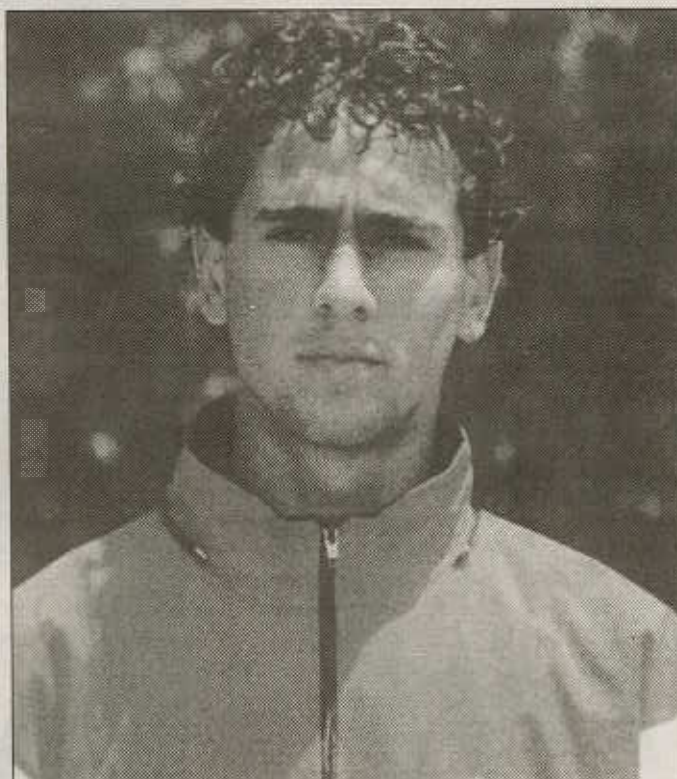
Q: How did you find the recent camp in Europe?

A: It was great being a part of the Australian camp again, it's always great catching up with the boys again, and I found the international experience very enjoyable.

Q: You've been away from home for quite a while now — what do you miss the most?

A: Actually quite a few things ... my friends, my great soccer tapes and my backyard.

Q: Pressure is mounting with the final squad of 18 to be named in four months ... how are you starting to react



Kosta Salapasis: Inspired by success.

to this, and how are your fellow squad members — and competitors for spots — reacting to this?

A: We all have one mission, and that is to make the final squad. I'm just going to try my best to be one of the boys who is there at the end, but then, so will every other member of the squad. Really, when it comes down to it, worrying about whether you're going to make the final squad or not is not going to help a thing.

You just hope things go well for yourself.

Q: Being very much "by yourself" in Spain, is there someone that helps you, particularly mentally, cope with the mounting pressure of trying to secure a spot in the LG Under-23 Squad?

A: No not really. You learn to deal with pressure through experience, and once you learn to do that, it's not so stressful. I prefer to look at the positive aspects of my footballing life, and to tell you the truth, the lead-up to the Games is more exciting than anything else.

Q: How would you describe yourself as a player, and where (and why) do you fit into the LG U-23 squad?

A: I'm a striker who has pace, who is also good on the ball, and a footballer who relies more on technique than strength.

Q: Is there much talk about the Olympics in your part of the world?

A: Yes, actually, the talk is really starting to build up in Spain, as the media really believes that the Spanish

Olympic team could be one of the favourites to win a medal at Sydney 2000.

Q: Is there any one particular member of this current squad who you feels stands out?

A: The South Melbourne connection, be it current or ex, always catches my eye, so I'd say the likes of Tansel Baser, Bill Damianos, Con Blatsis and Michael Curcija.

Q: Is there a particular Olympian who inspires you, and why?

A: Yes, Michael Johnson, even though he's not an Aussie, he's a freak.

Q: You've played quite a few internationals for Australia in overseas countries. Exactly how important is home crowd support?

A: Currently playing in a country where they take their football very seriously, you can't overstate the importance of the home crowd, and there is no doubt that we will be relying on our own supporters a lot.

To have the home crowd right behind you can lift a team to another level at times.

Q: And your final words for the Australian public?

A: We can't say it enough — please get right behind the Australian team and give us as much support as possible.

Feature courtesy of Soccer Australia media department. Already profiled Brett Emerton, Steven Laybutt, Lucas Neill, Michael Curcija, Nick Rizzo, Jacob Burns, Daniel Allsopp, Tansel Baser, Mile Sterjovski, Chris Coyne, Kasey Wehrman and Hayden Foxe.

"...worrying about whether you're going to make the final squad or not is not going to help a thing."

OFF THE CROSSBAR



By Allan Crisp

RAMS HOIST MAY DAY SIGNAL

Friends of the financially strapped Elizabeth City Soccer Club could hardly have chosen a more appropriate date than May 1st to convene a meeting which they hope will resurrect the club.

The group hoisted the "May Day" distress signal after a gathering at the Ramsay Park clubrooms last week mustered sufficient support to suggest a seemingly impossible salvage operation could succeed.

With a debt approaching \$200,000, Elizabeth City has been placed in the hands of an administrator, but the original meeting raised hopes that the club could, at least survive until the end of the current Premier League season.

True Blue Rams supporters believe the demise of the northern areas club would be damaging to the entire City and to the game of soccer in South Australia.

In company with Modbury Jets, the Elizabeth City Club is the only Premier League representative in the north — an area bristling with thousands of junior players.

The passion and pride of concerned members has rescued sporting clubs from

extinction in recent times.

The friends of Elizabeth believe they have the necessary clout to duplicate yet another rescue operation.

Their flyer does not mince words — "If you care about soccer in the Elizabeth-Playford area, and want to continue to see northern soccer in the Premier League, be at this meeting."

"Join the action group! All interested people please attend, for the good of our game."

The place is the Elizabeth City Soccer Club, Barfield Crescent, Elizabeth West. The date, Monday, May 1, time 7.30pm.

HOLD UP

Adelaide City's last Friday night home game against Northern Spirit was used as a security procedure trial run for the pending Olympic Games tournaments to be played at the Hindmarsh Stadium.

The equipment employed was a magnetometer, a scanning device similar to that used at airport terminals.

Over 3000 supporters passed through the scanner, which was used only at the Manton Street entrance to the Eastern grandstand.

Officials said disruptions were minimal and the fact that the kick-off was delayed by five minutes was attributed to the late arrival of a large number of spectators and had nothing to do with the frisking procedure.

No great inconvenience you say? Maybe not, but pity the poor banner bearers, who bravely kept City's biggest, heaviest, flag of the season upright, while a stern wind blew up a storm.

Incidentally, only one fan was turned back after setting the magnetometer



Phil Scardigno: Croydon coach.

beeping. The offender was found to be carrying a small pocket knife, which he dutifully returned to his car before he was admitted.

CROOK DEAL

Northern Spirit utility Ian Crook has too much professional acumen to take umbrage, but the polished defender was the victim of a Freudian slip by the person who filled out Northern Spirit's team sheet for the match against Adelaide City.

Perhaps the fault could be traced to the photocopier, but our sheet showed No. 29 as Ian "Crock."

COACHES GET TOUGH

Good old fashioned discipline paid off for a couple of Premier League coaches over the past two rounds.

Port Lion Pirates coach Mike Barnett set the trend when he dropped star performers, Bill Misailidis, Peter Mihalopoulos and George Tsonis from his A team to face crack outfit the Croydon Kings in the round 8 game.

The trio were omitted from the starting line-up because of failure to adhere to club rules, but Port triumphed 3-0 in the away match.

Misailidis and Tsonis came off the bench in that game, but in the true tradition of not drastically changing a winning line-up, they were on the bench for Port Lion's next encounter, a 3-1 win over Elizabeth.

Croydon coach Phil Scardigno found himself in a similar situation last week when regular first team choices, Joel Porter and Josh Christison breached club discipline, so he duly relegated the pair to the Under 23 team.

And despite losing Ken Tosh to a red card just before half time and missing hot shot scorer Porter and former Australian schoolboy international Christison, the Kings notched their amazing 2-1 away win over previously unbeaten Blue Eagles.

DRIBBLE MANIA

Adelaide's central business district was abuzz with 500 junior soccer players last Wednesday.

The youngsters responded to an invita-

tion to participate in "The Big Dribble" — an exciting parade from Victoria Parade, through King William Street and down to Rundle Mall.

Garbed in their favoured soccer strips, the youngsters drilled and paraded their soccer skills, along with sporting celebrities and media types.

Rundle Mall housed mini-soccer pitches for the demonstration which was headed by Adelaide City Force captain Alex Tobin and South Australian Sports Institute development squad players.

The occasion was arranged to celebrate Adelaide's part in staging Olympic Games soccer matches at Hindmarsh Stadium in September and to demonstrate their allegiance to soccer football.



Alex Tobin: "The Big Dribble."

"The Big Dribble" certificate each participant received will doubtless be treasured right up until the kids graduate to Socceroo or Matilda status.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

The Wolves have reached the top of the league table, but can they maintain that number one position?

Coach Nick Theodorakopoulos and the players need now more than ever courage, determination, stamina and character to hang on to their hard won advantage. Let's hope they don't let it slip.

For the area and the true soccer believers it would be fantastic to reach the ultimate goal.

The team is at full strength, the coach has the complete squad of 21 players available for selection, the ball is in his court to field the right side in every game.

It is exciting for all following the Wolves.

Grand Final venues and possible teams competing are in the news this time of the year with the NSL nearing completion. For hopeful Wollongong fans looking back most would not remember a local team in a State or

National grand final.

The last team from the Illawarra area in something similar to today's format was in 1963 when South Coast United played in the NSW State Grand Final, at the old Sydney football stadium, filled with 35,000 to capacity plus another 10,000 or even more unable to get tickets.

Wollongong fans travelled and for in their thousands. The record the locals won the match 4-0 against then leading soccer club APIA.

A day remembered and never forgotten by the supporters. Maybe the Wolves should consider inviting Jim Kelly then coach of South Coast United living in Blackpool, UK for the possible grand occasion.

Goal scoring records — former Wolves striker Pat Brodnik scored seven (7) goals in one game, most likely never to be equalled. Present day strikers Stuart Young, Saso Petrovski, Scott Chipperfield and esala Masi combined are doing a great job for the club.

Their task is not finished yet, the nail-biting season end

demands more goals scored for the Wolves.

Wolves Cubs: Latest results against Sydney Olympic are U/11s lost 0-3, U/12s lost 0-1, U/13s drew 3-3, U/14s drew 1-1, U/15s lost 9-3 and U/16s won 1-0, a great victory the winning goal scored by Ben Bartlett.

Illawarra Soccer Results: Round six in the ICU Premier League: Tarrawanna lost 2-4 to Kemblawarra, Consiston drew 1-1 with Northern United, Port Kembla won 6-3 against Bulli, Western Suburbs lost at home 2-6 to Cringila — the upset of the round — Albion Park WE lost 2-3 to Wollongong Olympic, Lysaghts won 3-0 over Shoalhaven City.

Competition leaders at present are Lysaghts — Wollongong Olympic — Kemblawarra — Western Suburbs.

ICU First Division results round six: Kiama lost 1-2 to University, Dapto beat Woonona 2-1, South Coast United beat Highlands 4-0, Illawarra United lost 3-4 to Helensburgh, Warilla Wanderers won 4-3 over Fernhill, Balgownie won 2-0 against Berkeley, Bellambi beat Shellharbour City 4-2.

Front runners at present are Balgownie — Picton — Helensburgh — Woonona.

SERMANNI ADOPTS IRON FIST

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos midfielder Gabriel Gonzalez may well have played his last game for the club after he was named as the anonymous source who attacked three teammates and a journalist in a newspaper article last week.

Coach Tom Sermanni said Gonzalez had admitted being the unnamed Cosmos source who had launched the tirade. No names were mentioned in the article, but the three players were obviously Scottish imports David Winnie and Brian Hamilton, and the Melbourne-based Jason Polak.

The source attacked Winnie and Hamilton as not being worth the big wages they were drawing, and Polak for training with the team just once a week.

The journalist, just as easily identified as the Canberra Times' James Nicholson, was bagged for continually running down the team.

Sermanni, who had earlier vowed to track down and punish the culprit, said Gonzalez complained of being "a bit misquoted".

"But whatever he said, it had the potential of tainting the reputation of three honest, reliable and dedicated professionals," Sermanni said.

"These criticisms were underhand and absolutely disgraceful, and by making them, this player has committed one of the cardinal sins of the game. He has been unprofessional, immature and shown he has no character."

Gonzalez was immediately dropped from the Canberra squad for the game against Northern Spirit Saturday, and while the coach said he was keeping his options open, it appears likely the midfielder will not play in any of the club's remaining NSL matches.

And Sermanni said he will adopt an iron-fist regime with his squad for the remainder of the season.

In an interview with ABSW, Sermanni agreed he



Tom Sermanni: Almost walked.

had come close to walking away from the Cosmos after the shocking 6-0 home loss to Wollongong Wolves.

He said it was only the persuasion of the club chairman, Ian Knop, and the "tremendous support" he had received from the Cosmos back-up staff and some elements of the team, which had convinced him to stay on.

"In the end, with regard to the work that others have put in to keep the club afloat, I thought that quitting now would be a pretty gutless thing to do," he said.

In the meantime he has stepped up discipline within the club, insisting all players went on the coach for the game at Northern Spirit, rather than allowing those with homes in Sydney to make their own way to the ground.

"It is not my style - and I don't like doing it - but the players have left me no choice," he said.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COMMITMENT TO AUSSIE SOCCER FLAILING

Dear Sir,

This is an excerpt from 'The Age' - Green Guide with regards to television ratings.

"In sport, the ABC should urgently re-assess its commitment to Australian Soccer. It devotes two hours each Sunday evening- 5pm to 7pm- to coverage of the domestic soccer season. But it has become clear in recent weeks that next to no one is watching.

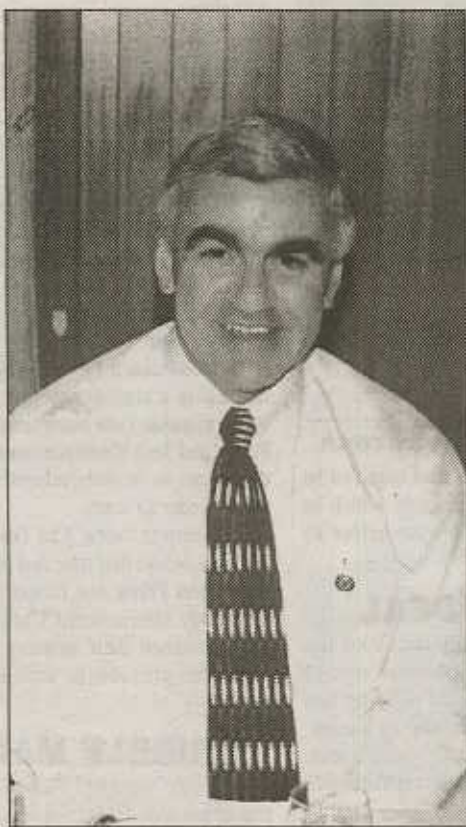
Last Sunday, it attracted as few as 6000 viewers - there are 3,777,000 potential viewers in the Melbourne region - and was beaten by every other channel, even SBS, whose weekly motorsports magazine, 'Speed Week', had four times as many viewers." (1).

I, like most other soccer supporters, am very concerned by the lack of leadership shown by Soccer Australia towards the sabotage inflicted on our game by the Seven Network. It is increasingly apparent that soccer is not in their interests and that their control of our representation is based on other commercial factors i.e their multimillion dollar arrangement with the AFL.

Yet in disregard of these facts we have our Chairman, Basil Scarsella, saying otherwise, even following organised protest from the grass-roots.

"The role of television is critical to the success of the sport. Our partnership with the Seven Network has given us a platform, whereby we have the opportunity to showcase soccer and it is the intention of the (SA) board to build the brand name recognition of soccer in our business alliance with the Seven Network". (2)

Is this purely rhetorical or is it the intention of Soccer Australia to persevere in its 'relationship' with the Seven Network? According to the General Manager of the NSL, Stefan Kamasz, this is their intention. "But in order to achieve that, the league



Basil Scarsella: Needs to get the product right.

itself has to restructure. At the moment, neither the corporate nor television sector is enthusiastic enough. Until we get our product right, we can't expect things to change." (3)

I am left to ask, has the 'product' of soccer, in these crude marketing terms, been devalued so much

by our last failure to qualify for the World Cup, or is it not the direct responsibility of Soccer Australia and the decisions they have made, that local soccer is being discarded and buried like an unwanted jewel?

Soccer Australia's refusal to co-operate with the broader soccer community, namely SBS and traditional clubs, including all grass-roots football teams regardless of identity or history, is hurting our game badly and jeopardising its long-term future.

Soccer Australia must admit its mistakes if it is to rectify them. If it continues to disregard the soccer community then ultimately it will have signalled a need for executive change.

Chris Christoforou
Melbourne, VIC



3. Michael Cockerill, 'Spirit of Progress' Sydney Morning Herald, 20/4/00

Chris, I hear your words and am in total accordance with your sentiments. One wonders what needs to be done to resurrect our flailing coverage but at times it seems that all us commentators and many fans know the remedy, but those that make the decisions either do not know or can not do anything about it.

I, with you and many others, wait in anticipation of better things all the while continuing to push the commercial media and Soccer Australia for a better deal. - Ed.

Footnotes:

1. Ross Warneke, 'The Game kicks goals in new slot', The Age 'Green Guide', 20/4/00, p.8

2. Bert Van Bedaf, 'Soccer Australia Annual Report- Lofty aims still leave much to achieve',

Send letters to
Australian and British
Soccer Weekly

PO Box 155
Marrickville NSW 1475 or fax (02) 9550 9332
or e-mail to: soccerweekly@hotmail.com

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION - LOWER DIVISIONS

FEDERATION DIVISION ONE

FIRST GRADE: Bathurst'75 1 (M Lorimer 76m) Dulwich Hill 1 (M Bideau), M.S.C. Liverpool 2 (P Moon 75m T Dunlop 80m) Hajduk Wanderers 1 J Anderson 81m Penalty), Stanmore Hawks 2 (T Katsaros 20m T Lara 55m) Illawarra Lions 1 (A Mohseni 70m), Fraser Park 1 (M Cogger 88m) AC United 1 (J Melissourgos 13m), Rockdale City Suns 3 (S Najdoski 1/44m J Manolopoulos 16m) Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Ryde City Gunners 2 (L Wilson 16m R Miranda 85m Penalty) Auburn United 3 (C Elgun 36m N Vares 64/73m).

UNDER 21: Bathurst'75 2 Dulwich Hill 3, M.S.C. Liverpool 0 Hajduk Wanderers 1, Stanmore Hawks 16 Illawarra Lions 0, Fraser Park 1 AC United 4, Rockdale City Suns 2 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1, Ryde City Gunners 5, Auburn United 1.

UNDER 18: Bathurst'75 0 Dulwich Hill 1, M.S.C. Liverpool 0 Hajduk Wanderers 1, Stanmore Hawks 3 Illawarra Lions 0, Fraser Park 2 AC United 5, Rockdale City Suns 1 Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Ryde City Gunners 9, Auburn United 1.

FEDERATION DIVISION

TWO

FIRST GRADE: Sydney University 0 Greystanes 4, White City 3 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 3, Hurstville ZSC 3 Mt Pritchard 0, Belmore Hercules 6 Sydney District 1, Central Coast Lakers 2 University of NSW 0, Hills United 2 Hakoah 0.

UNDER 21: Sydney University 1 Greystanes 1, White City 3 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 5, Hurstville ZSC 2 Mt Pritchard 3, Belmore Hercules 3 Sydney District 2, Central Coast Lakers 2 University of NSW 1, Hills United 3 Hakoah 0.

UNDER 18: Sydney University 0 Greystanes 0, White City 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1, Hurstville ZSC 1 Mt Pritchard 2, Belmore Hercules 2 Sydney District 1, Central Coast Lakers 1 University of NSW 1, Hills United 1 Hakoah 0.

FEDERATION DIVISION THREE

FIRST GRADE: Nepean District 2 The Wanderers 1, Camden Tigers 2 Colo Colo 5, Western Sydney Lions 0 Balmain 0, Trasandinos 3 Prospect United 6, Holy Cross Ryde 4 Prairiewood United 5, Parramatta City 1 Liverpool City 2.

RESERVE GRADE: Nepean District 4 The Wanderers 0, Camden Tigers 3 Colo Colo 1, Western Sydney Lions 1 Balmain 4,

Trasandinos 2 Prospect United 2, Holy Cross Ryde 1 Prairiewood United 0, Parramatta City 6 Liverpool City 0.

WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

FIRST GRADE: Nepean Association 2 Macarthur Rams 0.

UNDER 21: Nepean Association 1 Macarthur Rams 6.

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE

UNDER 19: UTS 11 CSI Schofields 1.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE

GRADE 13: Sydney United 1 Northern Spirit 1, Sydney Olympic 5 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Marconi Stallions 3 Macarthur Rams 2, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 0, Penrith Panthers 2 Parramatta Eagles 6, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Blacktown City Demons 2, Bankstown City 3 Central Coast Coasties 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Newcastle Breakers 4, Fairfield Bulls 5 Wollongong Wolves 2, Sutherland Sharks 11 Canterbury Marrickville 0.

GRADE 14: Sydney United 0 Northern Spirit 2, Sydney Olympic 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Marconi Stallions 2 Macarthur Rams 1, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 0,

Penrith Panthers 2 Parramatta Eagles 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Blacktown City Demons 2, Bankstown City 2 Central Coast Coasties 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Newcastle Breakers 2, Fairfield Bulls 0 Wollongong Wolves 7, Sutherland Sharks 3 Canterbury Marrickville 2.

GRADE 15: Sydney United 1 Northern Spirit 3, Sydney Olympic 3 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Marconi Stallions 2 Macarthur Rams 1, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 0, Penrith Panthers 1 Parramatta Eagles 5, Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 Blacktown City Demons 2, Bankstown City 3 Central Coast Coasties 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Newcastle Breakers 1, Fairfield Bulls 0 Wollongong Wolves 3, Sutherland Sharks 3 Canterbury Marrickville 1.

GRADE 16: Sydney United 3 Northern Spirit 3, Sydney Olympic 5 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Marconi Stallions 3 Macarthur Rams 1, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 2, Penrith Panthers 1 Parramatta Eagles 4, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Blacktown City Demons 1, Bankstown City 2 Central Coast Coasties 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Newcastle Breakers 6, Fairfield Bulls 1 Wollongong Wolves 1, Sutherland Sharks 3 Canterbury Marrickville 0.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE

GRADE 13: Southern Branch 6 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 0 AC United 2. **GRADE 14:** Southern Branch 3 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 0 AC United 1.

GRADE 15: Southern Branch 2 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 0 AC United 1. **GRADE 16:** Southern Branch 0 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 1, AC United 0.

SUPER CADET LEAGUE

GRADE 11: Marconi 0 Parramatta Eagles 0.

GRADE 12: Marconi 8 Parramatta Eagles 0.

CADET LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

GRADE 11: Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2 MSC Liverpool 0, Hajduk Wanderers 1 Stanmore Hawks 1.

GRADE 12: Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 MSC Liverpool 0, Hajduk Wanderers 5 Stanmore Hawks 2.

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NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

MARCONI STALLIONS PERTH GLORY

By John Economos

The Marconi Stallions galloping second half display plus two world class goals last Good Friday, not only crucified the Perth Glory into a 3-2 defeat for the first time, but has crept them to within one point of second placed Perth Glory.

Marconi was almost dead and buried in the first session by a rampaging Perth Glory, but an absolutely incredible world class goal lashed in in the 58th minute by Marconi's quiet, left wingback Brendan Renaud, was the turning point in the match that allowed Marconi to get out of jail and steam home to win this precious game.

Within the first 12 minutes the Glory had Marconi kneeling through two whirlwind goals scored by right wingback Robbie Trajkovski (penalty) and 18-year-old sweeper Ljubo Milicevic, but within 13 minutes into the second half, a completely revitalised Marconi had savagely hit back with two world class goals from steely midfielder Chad Gibson plus a shattering 'Brazilian-styled' incredible effort from left wingback Brendan Renaud.

This fabulous, action-packed match yielded Marconi's historic first win over the Glory in the 10 clashes now played between these two giant teams.

Marconi's gangling and lethal 36-year-old striker Francis Awaritefe was, for the first time, given a thunderous and rousing standing ovation by the hard-to-please Marconi fans when coach Eddie Krncevic replaced him with seven minutes left on the clock to bring on the fresh legs of Buddy Farah.

Glory drew first blood in the ninth minute when Glory's striker Bobby Despotovski broke into the clear and into Marconi's box where referee Matthew Breeze felt Marconi's lateral defender Pan Kuen Kim fouled the ball carrier with a sliding tackle to award a penalty. Despotovski easily scored from the spot by side footing to the right sending Marconi's young goalie the wrong way.

Three minutes later the Glory doubled the scoreline against a now lame Marconi when following a corner flung in by Scott Miller, Turnbull dropped the cross and the Glory's 18-year-old sweeper Milicevic making his debut start blasted into the target a lethal left-footed drive.

Marconi was completely rattled and only twin strikers Francis Awaritefe and

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Sean Babic, plus right wingback Danny Invincibile tried to make a fight of it but this trio lacked any support from their midfielders.

The Glory without Con Boutsianis (in England with Bolton Wanderers) and Troy Halpin (knee injury) as playmakers, used striker Alistair Edwards in that role.

Ironically as early as in the fifth minute it should have been Marconi taking the lead but from a Chad Gibson corner which defender Mark Babic headed on target, was headed off the line by left wingback Scott Miller.

Six minutes from the break Perth's right wingback Trajkovski switched to the left flank and steamed up that line before dangerously dribbling in across the byline, but his cross was smacked down by Turnbull. With two minutes left before the break, left wingback Scott Miller raided again but his perfect flat cross across the six yard box saw free striker Aurelio Schwertz unbelievably fail to control to hit home from point-blank range.

Five minutes into the second session Marconi viciously hit back through industrious midfielder Chad Gibson with an excellent cracking goal that started from right wingback Invincibile. The attacking defender's cross was cleared by Perth but only as far as to the hungry Gibson who from 20 metres out cracked an electrifying right-footed volley that crashed into the target.

By the 58th minute Marconi had made a come back bigger than Lazarus when Brendan Renaud scored what surely must go down as the best goal scored by anyone in the League for years.

With nothing short of typical Brazilian style of skills, Renaud juggled a Gibson free kick that had been cleared by Glory's defence onto his boot. Then he flicked the ball onto his thigh before dropping it to hit with a violent left-footed volley that screamed just inside the far post to explode the entire Marconi Stadium into a wild frenzy.

With the scoreboard now balanced at 2-2, Marconi's strength, power and drive became ruthless as they surged forward with raid after raid with monotonous regularity.

Invincibile repeatedly pierced down the right flank whilst Awaritefe and his strike mate Sean Babic ripped Glory's lines to pieces. Awaritefe, Marconi's most dangerous player over the past five weeks, had been almost well shackled by the Glory's central marker Dion Valle, but with 10 minutes left Valle was stretched off with what appeared to be a nasty knee injury.

Sean Babic was denied a goal a minute after Renaud's 'Brazilian blast' as he streaked away into the Glory's box. However a fabulous covering and sliding tackle by the Glory's skipper and stopper Gareth Naven, clipped the danger away.

Sean Babic was finally rewarded in the 73rd minute for his alert and mobile efforts when again, Marconi's 'Man Of The Match' Renaud did the engineering work from the left. Renaud raided, played a one-two with Awaritefe before slinging in perfect cross to find Babic climbing high to head glance into the target and lift Marconi for the first time into the lead.

Marconi's coach Eddie Krncevic despite having the Glory's coach Bernd Stange as a very close friend, now was not going to show mercy as he went in for the kill by bringing on first the fresh legs of Kris Trajanovski then Buddy Farah, to turn up the furnace on the West Australians.

After the match a still calm and cool Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic, reflected: "It was vital that we took all three League points tonight and at halftime when we were down 0-2 I told my players that it was not such a big result to come back from. I also told them that it was a good test to see what we can do in the second half even though I questioned some of the referee's decisions. We scored some world class goals tonight and my 'mate' Francis Awaritefe' like always, hated being replaced, but I wanted some fresh legs to keep up the pressure.

"I was however not happy that we didn't get a penalty when Sean Babic was mowed down and it was even a red card offence I would have thought. Not even a fulltime team can play flat out for 90 minutes, and our run home is not an easy one, but it's better than the Perth Glory's. I have no doubt that this team (Marconi) now can go all the way (to win the Grand Final). It was a great game for the spectators, but not so much for the coaches, but no one can really dispute that we played really well in the second half," ended the cool and unruffled suave Krncevic.

Meanwhile the Glory's German coach Bernd Stange evaluated: "There were two very different teams in the first half as it was all Perth Glory as we played wide with class, scored two goals and could have had another two, but in the second half I don't know what happened as we seemed to fall asleep and became lazy and arrogant. Then we copped two world class goals, panicked and made things difficult for ourselves. Tonight we tried to make a bigger gap between us and Marconi but missed it and we do not have the class to play counter attacking Soccer. Our 18-year-old sweeper started to struggle in the second half. For the whole season we tried to improve from our position last season, but tonight we allowed Marconi far too many crosses to come in and that's when we started to panic. I used Alistair Edwards in the midfield but he's not the substitute from Con Boutsianis."

Stange ended with a scathing attack about the Marconi pitch by stating: "I was disappointed with the bad surface tonight as it was a terrible pitch and I can't accept it."

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS CARLTON SC

By Alby Srevnd

Andy Harper didn't quite celebrate his 300th NSL match with a victory but would have slept well on Easter Saturday after a gallant 10-man Breakers held the very physical Carlton Soccer Club to a 0-0 draw at Breakers Stadium.

Harper became the 31st three hundred game veteran with a typical workaholic performance in the plucky Breakers side.

In a refereeing performance that could only be described as inept the Breakers were reduced to 10 men when speedy midfielder Andy Roberts was banished in the 36th minute with his second yellow card of the game. But the decision by whistle blower Eddie Lennie to book John Buonavoglia in the 29th minute for a dive when fouled in the box by Carlton's Steve

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Horvat brought the ire of the 5735 fans and Breakers coach Lee Sterrey.

"I've got no problem with being down to 10 men and making that decision (to send Roberts)," Sterrey said.

"But the decision before that if Jockey's (Buonavoglia) wasn't a penalty well then I'm not breathing air.

"His (Eddie Lennie) performance tonight I thought was quite ordinary."

Both sides were restricted to very few chances throughout the match with Carlton going close six minutes into the match through Simon Colosimo. The Breakers defence with young Josh Ferguson, making his first starting appearance, blocking his shot from the six-yard line.

Andy Harper had an opportunity to nail his 99th NSL goal in his 300th game on the half hour but was wide of the mark after a deft pass from Mark Wilson.

Breakers keeper Bob Catlin and Carlton shot stopper Dean Anastasiadis both tipping goal bound headers over the bar before the break.

Catlin was on hand again late in the match to thwart Carlton striker Archie Thompson's close range volley. John Markovski, from a 20 metre dead ball, watched Catlin tip his fierce strike over the bar.

"Catlin pulled off crucial saves when we needed them but the whole back four dealt with things in the air," Sterrey added.

"Young Josh Ferguson did tremendous in his first game in the national league.

"It was a gutsy performance overall and I thought there was a couple of times we could have pinched it."

For Carlton coach Stuart Munro it was a matter of ruing the one that got away.

"I was disappointed with our performance," Munro said.

"We started the game reasonably well and really could have been three up in the first 10 minutes. I agree with Lee (Sterrey) that (the Buonavoglia incident) could have been a penalty.

"When they went down to 10 men we never showed any kind of quality.

"At the moment our destiny is in our own hands."



Andy Roberts: Sent off.

GIPPSLAND FALCONS MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

By Damian Tripodi

The Gippsland Falcons showed determination and character to come back from a massive 4-1 loss against Marconi last week, to beat the Melbourne Knights in a 3-2 goal feast in a game full of thrills, spills, passion and emotion.

Both sides were well prepared, looked sharp and ready to pounce on the opportunities. There were some outstanding individual performances, but most impressive were Gippsland's Andy Vargas and Adrian Savage.

Vargas scored two of the three goals and created the other, whilst Savage had the envious task of filling the shoes of inspirational captain Mehmet Durakovic and did so in a most commendable and praiseworthy manner, he was solid in defence.

An interesting factor in the game was the competition between the Vargas brothers, today playing on opposite sides. Whilst Roddy played well for the Knights, it must be stated that Andy came out slightly ahead on points.

For the Knights, following a massive 4-0 win against the Auckland Kings last week, the defeat was a bitter pill to swallow. Coach Vlado Vanis after the game stated that in his opinion his team was badly done by.

He stated that a disallowed goal late in the game should have stood. Referee Jeremy Blaney deemed that Ivan Kelic fouled Gippsland's Dean Fak as he flew high to head the ball into the net. It appeared that Kelic placed both hands on Fak to get extra leverage.

"In my eyes it was a goal and the penalty in the first half was soft," declared the coach.

The opening minutes of the game saw the ball travel from end to end with neither side able to capitalise, however, after only 10 minutes, the Knights were on the board through Kelic, who was causing some concern to the Gippsland defence.

Gippsland defender Manny Gotis, with a header attempted to intercept a low cross coming from the left directed to Kelic. Gotis, in his attempt dived

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low and appeared to have the ball covered, however, the ball dipped at the last moment and the header was fumbled. This allowed Kelic to pounce on the ball and drive it into the net.

The Falcons responded well with good creative thrusts forward resulting in a shot at goal in the 12th minute by Dean Fak following good service from Clayton Bell. Fak was denied by the Knights keeper Lupce Acevski with a brilliant fully stretched finger tip deflection.

One minute later, the Falcons came perilously close to equalising following a low cross by John Hutchinson, to Vargas, whose header virtually scraped the upright.

A foul on Clayton Bell in the penalty area in the 26th minute, resulted in a penalty being awarded to the Falcons. From the spot, Vargas converted and brought the scores level.

The Gippsland fans became ecstatic three minutes later, as Vargas set up John Hutchinson, who with a header put his team in front.



Ivan Kelic: Knights best.

Neither team let up with the action which was fast and furious. Both created opportunities.

Vargas was in the action again in the 36th minute with a good set up for Brian Macnicol whose shot was denied by a good save by Acevski.

Adrian Cervinski made a valid attempt for the Knights at the 39th, but his shot was well taken by Jevdjevic.

Macnicol passed the ball to Nilo in the 41st but, under pressure, the nippy striker sent the ball slightly wide. Moments later a Hutchinson shot was deflected for a corner by Acevski.

Early in the second half, Nilo again, following good service from Bell forced Acevski to miraculously deflect.

From here the Knights began to look dangerous with a series of thrusts

forward which often penetrated the solid Falcons defence, causing moments of concern. The Gippslanders, however, gradually regained cohesion and in the 73rd minute, in spectacular fashion, Vargas won the ball in the mid-field, took on a player, weaved through the pack, saw an opening and drove the ball into the net for his second and his team's third goal.

This in some way as a record breaking feat, as the Gippslanders' highest score this season, was two goals scored against Northern Spirit earlier in the competition.

Newly signed youngster Naum Sekulovski substituted Robbie Puca on the field and was immediately in the action with good creative play. On two occasions he split the Knights defence but when one on one with the keeper he just couldn't make the final finish.

The Knights reduced the difference at the 85th minute when substitute Paul Urlovic headed home a ball coming from a corner kick.

The visitors tried at all costs to balance the equation but without success. Right on the death, Macnicol from a Nilo cross was denied by Acevski who played a great game for the Knights.

The atmosphere at Mobil Park at the conclusion of the game resembled that of a premiership win, the Gippsland victory ended a long drought of defeats.

Gippsland coach Jeff Hopkins at the end of the game stated that it was a spectacular game and that his team showed exceptional character to come back and win against the Melbourne Knights following last week's defeat.

"Following a 4-1 defeat some teams would have thrown in the towel, but we got straight back in the game kept our heads and dominated."

On the question that his side is noted for creating chances and not scoring and yet today they scored three, he replied that they created and took the chances.

"So many times this year we played some good football and not put the chances away. I am very pleased, not for myself, but for the lads they really deserved it, they have been working hard for six or seven weeks." Hopkins also stated that the Knights have been the in form team in the second half.

"Vlado Vanis has put together a good team that scores many goals. They have been in the in form team in the second half of the competition, but I felt that the mood was right and we were quietly confident that we would win today," stated the coach.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARRAMATTA POWER

By Daniel Glorelando

Parramatta Power's chances of making the playoffs were all but extinguished last Saturday night with the genius of Pablo Cardozo and Gabriel Mendez helping Olympic to unplug the Power 2-1 at Belmore Sports Ground.

On a cold and chilly night, the injection of Mendez into the game upon the resumption of the second half heated up a game and Olympic's chances of once again claiming a top six spot.

Mendez, who has been out of action since twisting his knee against Gippsland on March 12, immediately ran rings around the Power defence, and ultimately was the spark that kick-started Olympic's hopes after falling behind to a 23rd minute strike to Power striker Mile Sterjovski.

However it was his South American partner in crime, Pablo Cardozo, who ultimately produced the moment of brilliance that handed Olympic their first victory since March 12.

That moment came four minutes from the end, as Cardozo sent the 3,841 in attendance into raptures as he curled in a brilliant 25-yard free kick sending his shot into the top left corner of Crews' goal, leaving the keeper with no chance.

The goal was Cardozo's 18th of the season but more importantly a goal which ended the run of outs of the former league leaders.

Olympic coach Branko Culina was a relieved man after the match, acknowledging that the win over the Power was more important than any other league victory this season.

"It is more important than just three points, we forgot how to win in our last five or six games. You can't buy confidence and that win gave us that.

"The win has lifted the boys, it is an enormous confidence boost," said Culina.

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While Culina was delighted with the win, his opposite number, David Mitchell conceded that the loss had all but ended his team's chances of making the top six.

"If we still have a chance, we are playing well but we are getting too many goals scored against us."

Mitchell was weary that Mendez would be a threat, hence his decision to bring Peter Bennett onto the park in exchange for Steve Berry but the move came to late, in fact seconds after Mendez equalised for the home side.

That equaliser arrived 10 minutes after the break as Mendez turned in a cross from Kresimir Marusic, however the goal did come against the run of play and was more the fault of Parramatta keeper Andrew Crews than the Power back four.

A poor clearance by Crews fell right at the feet of Cardozo who layed off a wide ball to Marusic who from the left found Mendez who headed past Crews from six yards out.

Mitchell acknowledged that Mendez was ultimately the difference between the two sides with his goal inspiring the team to chase and eventually secure the full points.

"In the second half they pushed more men forward, and moved Mendez behind the front two which caused problems. Olympic lifted after the goal.

"We didn't have players like Cardozo and Mendez to pull the game out of the hat," said Mitchell.



Branko Culina: Delighted with the win.

Culina likewise praised his South American duo, pointing out Mendez as the missing link of the side over the past six weeks.

"He [Mendez] is very important because of the way we play, we need a ball player and he showed in patches that he was the missing link.

"It takes one player to do things and change a game, he [Cardozo] is a quality player who hasn't played good over the past weeks," said Culina.

Whilst the South American duo helped Olympic to a much needed win, the Power had looked in control of the match for the best part of an hour after the visitors scored from essentially their first foray forward.

The Power attacked down the left side and when defender Ahmad Elrich dummied a cross, the ball found Sterjovski who blasted a shot goal bound only to find Olympic keeper John Perosh in his way as he parried the stinging shot for a corner.

However Sterjovski was to get his revenge less than 30 seconds later from the resulting corner kick as Jacob Burns' cross was headed on by Joel Griffiths to find Sterjovski unmarked on the far post, with the young striker making a mistake from a yard out.

The game may well have taken a different direction in the 37th minute as Sterjovski once again looked set to add another goal to his tally this season.

This time his goal bound strike was foiled by teammate Walter Ardone who had unfortunately fallen in the way of Sterjovski's shot.

Olympic composed themselves and looked the better of the two in the second period although that dominance was not evident on the scoreboard.

With the score locked at 1-1, Brett Emerton missed two golden chances in the 59th and then the 79th minutes before squandering a chance to seal the victory two minutes from time as he blasted over the bar with only the keeper to beat.

One topic of concern for Olympic is the continuing disappointment of star import Kresimir Marusic.

Once again Marusic was unable to inject himself into the game as hoped, although coach Branko Culina was still standing behind his import and confident that he will find his top form in the run into the finals.

"Marusic is a good player but he hasn't played on a regular basis in

WOLLONGONG WOLVES BRISBANE STRIKERS

By Otto Bader

The Wollongong Wolves blew a golden chance to all but wrap up the minor premiership after conceding two goals in the final 10 minutes, to draw 2-2 with the Brisbane Strikers.

The match was given to the Strikers in the last three minutes after the Wollongong side was leading 2-0, but two goals in the 85th and then an equaliser five minutes into injury time helped keep Brisbane slim finals hopes alive.

Despite Brisbane's coach John Kosmina's arrogant claim, quote 'we gave them two cheap goals' they did not overpower the home side, the fundamental errors or careless play by the Wolves presented the opportunities in the final minutes — extra time of six minutes was played, surely not that much time was lost in a game of no major hold-ups — with Brisbane hardly able to miss tapping or heading the ball in.

Wolves keeper Les Pogliacom, who had a fine game, was not to blame for being exposed and embarrassed by his defenders. On the other Brisbane goalie, who according to John Kosmina in a sarcastic way saying "if he believes everybody praising Clint Bolton as the best keeper he should stop believing that" unquote, it was not the keepers fault that Wollongong scored.

The game started off slowly, both feeling out the opposition, tactically the Wolves looked solid but control of ball and play was not as sparkling as seen before.

Brisbane seemed to have more possession however did not really threaten the Wollongong goal only on one or two occasions.

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In the first half a free-kick hit well went straight Wolves keeper, safely taken. The home team scored after labouring build-up with a good header by striker Saso Petrovski, receiving a high ball and challenging the cross before the advancing keeper had a chance to get his hands to it.

The defence was caught off-guard. Scott Chipperfield missed an open goal in the 44th minute and should have done better, just not concentrating enough. The Wolves did not follow their usual strict concept, somehow they lacked concentration.

Despite that the side was in control and leading at the break.

The second half started with Brisbane coming out firing. The Wolves defence had to work hard and on one dangerous attack the ball was cleared off the line. Straight away the Wolves launched a counter attack with Scott Chipperfield who saw his well placed shot saved by an alert Brisbane keeper. Some strong challenges went in and Robert Stanton the home side's solid defender was flattened and needed treatment on the sideline but came back quickly.

In the 57th minute once more Wolves striker Saso Petrovski was quick enough to react and headed the ball in off a cross from Dino Mennillo, who had a uncharacteristic quite game.

The long standing record of 68 goal sin the NSL was broken and the Wolves achieved 69 in one season.

John Kosmina pointed out that original record was achieved in 30 games while the new one came in 31 matches. The game got a bit more reckless with Brisbane Stuart McClaren receiving the first booking for bringing



Nick Theodorakopoulos: Points dropped.

down Petrovski rather ungentlemanlike.

Substitutions were made for the Wolves Stuart Young (very quiet on the day), Noel Spencer and Mark Robertson came off for Paul Reid, David Huxley and Esala Masi, all late replacements and perhaps could have come earlier.

For Brisbane substitutions were made also late for Chay Lewis, Peter Dwyer and John McKain on came David Pilic, Adam Webber and Russell Miner, according to their coach all three replacements are young players just turning 18 years and on their first NSL experience.

If the fans thought the match fizzled out they were in for a shock when the Wolves gave two silly free-kicks away which resulted into last minute goals for Brisbane.

First a ball headed back to the keeper was intercepted by jade North with quick thinking and past the hapless Wolves keeper headed in.

Seconds later a corner allowed the somewhat quiet Paul Foster to head in the equaliser, not marked tight enough. Two silly goals given careless away by the Wolves despite what John Kosmina says that his side completely outplayed the Wolves.

The diplomatic home coach Nick Theodorakopoulos quietly agreed with him without giving anything more away, obviously aware his team can do much better. He will scrutinise each player and without panic will find the right words to lift his boys for an improved effort in games to come.

The Wolves need to do much more if they wish to fulfil their dream of a grand finish. They come that far and surely will not throw everything away now. Brisbane's John Kosmina said his team taught the Wolves a lesson and he could be right the Wollongong coach silently nodding with a smile.

A wake-up call for the Wolves and the fans know it was not a good performance but nevertheless will come out in force to cheer the boys on.

The crowd of 5253 might have been disappointed not seeing their team winning, but they did not lose either and are still leading the competition.

NORTHERN SPIRIT CANBERRA COSMOS

By Greg Danvers

A ploy to give his younger stars a run ahead of more experienced players nearly paid off at North Power Stadium for Northern Spirit coach Graham Arnold on Easter Saturday.

Canberra Cosmos scrambled and defended well to grab three away points winning 2-1 over Northern Spirit on the almost new and well appointed Stadium on the Central Coast at Gosford. Spirit may take more games to the North Power Stadium next season.

Purpose built for football, along with league and union, 10,200 spectators generated a buzzing atmosphere.

"A great night to play football on, great atmosphere and a great stadium," Arnold said.

"I think the crowd saw quite an attacking game of football from both sides and there was plenty of chances and goal mouth action and they should go home pretty happy.

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"It would be great to be up here all the time on a stadium like this and a complex like this.

"It proved a success tonight, if we were at North Sydney Oval on a Saturday night we would have only got around three thousand."

Cosmos led 1-0 after 37 minutes through the boot of Andrew Clark.

Clark, who scored twice, slotted home a deflection off Spirit debutant keeper Jess Van Stratten for a 1-0 half-time lead.

David Arranz lofted in a Daniel Watkins through ball that Van Stratten had trouble controlling leaving Clark an easy tap in.

Arranz and Clark combined on the left again in the 58th minute for the winner.

Seventeen-year-old Van Stratten had a solid debut even though beaten on two occasions in front of his home crowd. Growing up in the beach side suburb of Wamberal Van Stratten played his junior football with the Terrigal club.

Northern Spirit had worked hard for over three weeks promoting the game on the coast with a good result of over 10,000 in attendance many of those junior and senior players from the coast.

Goal-a-game Ryan Griffiths equalised for the Spirit two minutes before the Clark winner and the Spirit threw everything at the Cosmos defence and were let down by the lack of a quality striker.

Tireless Spirit wingback Matthew Langdon had worked down the left and steered a deep cross to Troy Cranney. Cranney's cross headed down by Matthew Bingley to the feet of Griffiths who calmly slotted the ball past the Canberra 'keeper Angelo Konstantinou.

"I think Langdon would probably be the best left side player in Australia at the moment," Arnold said.

"The whole year he has been outstanding it's a pity we don't have anyone that gets on the end of his quality service.

"He gets that much quality ball into the box it would be nice to have someone put them away for him."

Canberra after some indifferent form scrambled well all night and absorbed some sustained pressure from Spirit to please coach Tom Sermanni.

"We were put under a fair amount of pressure in the second half," Sermanni said.

"We hung on for long spells in the second half and I was happy with the way we played.

"Spirit were always going to make chances but we played with a lot of discipline and made them work hard for the chances they got."

Michael Cunico (Northern Spirit) and Daniel Watkins (Canberra Cosmos) both played their 50th NSL matches.

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NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SOUTH MELBOURNE SYDNEY UNITED

By Bert van Bedaf

A determined Sydney United defied South Melbourne for nearly an hour, but eventually it could not stem the home team's attacking tide, losing 1-0 at Bob Jane stadium last Saturday night. But it took an unfortunate own goal to gift South victory.

The Pumas held out until the 53rd minute, when an own goal by veteran Velimir Kupresak gave South victory.

"It wasn't such a great performance, but I give United credit, they defended well and made it hard for us," South coach Ange Postecoglou said.

Although disappointed not to get away with at least a draw, United coach Ivan Petkovic praised his young team for their courageous performance.

"We expected a hard game, but we came here to play soccer. Unfortunately we didn't score. Every game we create at least two or three chances, but we can't score," Petkovic said.

"I was happy with the performance of the boys. Most of them are only 19 or 20 years old and we really need a couple of experienced players in the team. But at this moment financially it isn't the best situation. It is up to the committee to decide," he said.

United 'keeper Brett Hughes, who was among Sydney's best players, kept the Pumas in the game with several excellent saves.

1
0

South attacked for most of the match, while the Pumas relied on the counter. They almost succeeded in snatching the lead two minutes before the interval, but South 'keeper Chris Jones showed his class in a tight situation.

From the kick-off, South looked to get ahead quickly. John Anastasiadis had a clear chance in the fifth minute, when Steve Panopoulos put him through on the left. But the South striker stranded on Hughes, who parried the ball before it was cleared.

Hughes also cleared in the 14th minute, denying South an early opening goal. Michael Curcija launched a wickedly low cross into the box, which would have fallen for Anastasiadis. But Hughes dived desperately to his right to palm the ball away from the striker's feet.

United defender Eddy Bosnar kept Chris Jones on his mettle with a thundering free-kick from 25 metres that the South 'keeper saved, but only at the second grab.



Velimir Kupresak: Own goal gave Souths hard fought victory.

South's free-kick specialist Goran Lozanovski unleashed a rocket from about the same distance, which Bosnar blocked with Hughes at the ready behind him as the home team's pressure mounted on the Pumas goal.

In the 33rd minute an Anastasiadis shot bounced awkwardly on target, but it did not trouble Hughes as it fell safely into his hands.

South created another clear chance in the 38th minute from a Jim Tsekini cross. Curcija's connecting header was beyond the reach of Hughes but also went wide of the far post.

Hughes twice came to United's rescue in the last five minutes before the break. First Anastasiadis broke through the United defence and Hughes managed to scramble it to safety, while a minute later he dived at the feet of Nick Orlic to thwart another South opportunity.

Yet, United created the best chance of the first half from an Ante Moric cross that cut through the South defence. Nick Bosevski connected with a lightning one-touch, but Jones kept a clean sheet with a reflex save.

South's Panopoulos fired a shot at goal only three minutes into the second half, but Aytec Genc saved off the line at the far post again denying the dual titleholder.

The pressure eventually told in the 53rd minute, when Lozanovski angled a low cross into goal, where Kupresak deflected it past Hughes into his own net.

United fought to the last, but it could not create the opportunities necessary to force the equaliser.

South continued to attack with Curcija and Anastasiadis having chances from close range, but Hughes prevented further damage, leaving South a slender home win.

AUCKLAND KINGZ PARRAMATTA POWER

By Gareth Duggan (In Auckland)

A hat-trick from an unlikely source and a more convincing midfield display were the hallmarks of the Football Kingz's 4-0 win over Parramatta Power last Wednesday night.

Chilean striker Aaron Silva claimed the club's first triple strike, showing just what he can do when given time and space by both teammates and the opposition.

Silva's unwillingness to savour the more physical aspects of the game has frequently left him as a bit-part player in Kingz matches until now, but against the Power he overcame that shortcoming.

The service he received from the midfield and his strike partner Wynton Rufer was excellent, and rather than having to tussle for possession in the air he was given quality passes to his feet.

He also seemed to have been granted complete freedom of movement by the Power defence, which allowed him too much space for his first two goals and then enthusiastically handed him his third.

While the Power back three of Joe Vrkic, Richard Plesa and Mark Byrnes looked untroubled by crosses, they recoiled in terror whenever Silva, Rufer or, later, Batram Suri ran at them with the ball on the ground.

4
0

Byrnes, who missed a vital penalty kick in the under-17 World Cup final shoot-out on this ground late last year, will not be looking forward to playing here again: He was also booked for a challenge on Kingz midfielder Chris Jackson.

Their awkwardness was exposed in the 26th minute, when Silva raced onto Rufer's pass and coolly slotted the opening goal.

The second was another example of how big defenders should not try and handle little strikers. Silva got in close, again thanks to Rufer's work, and left two Power players grasping before firing his shot past 'keeper Andrew Crews.

By this stage, the scoreline accurately reflected the dominance of the Kingz midfield.

The determination and intelligence of Harry Ngata, Jackson and Ivan Vicelich was giving them the upper hand against Steve Berry, John Angelucci and Walter Ardone.

While occasionally lacking width to attack quickly down the left, the Kingz did have a ready outlet on the right through Jonathon Perry.

Fortunately for the Power, Steve Eagleton had a fine game marking Perry and the majority of the Kingz's chances came through second-phase play through the inside-left channel.

Disappointing defending brought Silva his hat-trick just after the hour mark, as he turned quickly and scooted away to beat Crews.

A couple of minutes later, the insertion of Joel Griffiths — surprisingly left out of the starting 11 — brought a sharper edge to the Power attack as he chased and harried the Kingz rearguard with great

effect.

With Noah Hickey playing at sweeper for the Kingz he should have been a target for the visitors. Hickey is one of the most exciting young players in New Zealand and he would rate among the quickest in the league, but he has been blooded at this level only as a winger or striker not as a defender.

That either escaped the attention of the Power or they just couldn't do anything about it, and Hickey made a good fist of his new role.

Griffiths certainly tried to shake him up, forcing a couple of errors from Hickey which on another night could have proved disastrous.

The Kingz's fourth goal came in injury time, when Silva — everything he touched seemed to turn to gold — unselfishly squared the ball for Suri to shoot home.



David Mitchell: Complete disappointment.

ABSW PLAYER OF THE YEAR

ROUND 31

Auckland v Parramatta

3-A. Silva (AK)
2-N. Hickey (AK)
1-E. Eagleton (PP)

Marconi v Perth Glory

3-B. Renaud (MS)
2-C. Gibson (MS)
1-D. Valle (PG)

Sth Melbourne v Sydney Utd

3-B. Hughes (SU)
2-S. Iosifidis (SM)
1-G. Lozanovski (SM)

Wollongong v Brisbane

3-L. Pogliacomi (WW)
2-J. North (BS)
1-D. Cervinski (WW)

Newcastle v Carlton

3-G. Moore (NB)
2-A. Marth (C)
1-M. Wilson (NB)

Olympic v Parramatta

3-G. Mendez (SO)
2-P. Cardozo (SO)
1-M. Sterjovski (PP)

Spirit v Canberra

3-A. Clark (CC)
2-M. Langdon (NS)
1-A. Konstantinov (CC)

Gippslands v Melb Knights

3-A. Vargas (GF)
2-A. Savage (GF)
1-I. Kelic (MK)

**THE ABSW PLAYERS
POINTS WILL BE
HIDDEN FOR THE
REMAINDER OF THE
SEASON.
THE WINNER WILL BE
ANNOUNCED AT SEASON'S
END.**

TURN TO PAGE 32 FOR MATCH STATISTICS



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MCG SUPERCLINIC HUGE SUCCESS

800 Youngsters Get Thrill of a Lifetime

By Bert van Bedaf

The roar of the crowd was absent. But even the empty stands were imposing and so was the vast space of the MCG, home of Australian Rules football, cricket, as well as soccer lately - and the Melbourne venue for Olympic football in September.

But last Tuesday, the cries of joy from 800 youngsters, boys and girls between five and 10, kicking a soccer ball on Melbourne's most famous turf was as exciting as a traditional AFL grand final bounce in September.

Carlton's Simon Colosimo and South Melbourne's Michael Curcija sauntered across the green acres in search of a new group of kids, keen to learn the art of ball control, kicking with left and right feet, side-footing and heading the ball, and, finally, getting that all-important autograph.

The two Olyroos were part of an army of national soccer league players here to assist in the second annual superclinic, organised by the Victorian Soccer Federation. South Melbourne, Carlton as well as the Melbourne Knights and Gippsland Falcons assisted in the morning's success.

Last year the clinic was held at Melbourne's original soccer home, Olympic Park, but with the growing popularity of sport and Olympic football coming to the MCG, the VSF believed holding the clinic at the main ground this year added to its attraction.

Last year 600 kids turned up. The VSF had counted on 1000 youngsters this time. About 800 took up the free offer. Perhaps the need to register on the day might have stopped a few parents from taking their charges to the ground, but the place was buzzing with enthusiasm and those who missed out would have been sorry.

"I think, it's a great idea," Curcija, the NSL's joint top scorer, said.

"Especially getting the clubs' players involved. There was nothing like this organised when I was a kid," he said.

Whereas Curcija makes a reasonable chance of playing on this surface in a few months, Colosimo still needs to overcome a serious and well-documented knee injury.

Playing for Australia against Manchester United last July, striker Andy Cole committed an atrocious foul that forced Colosimo to undergo a full knee-reconstruction.

Only recently, nine months later, has the talented Carlton midfielder been able to play senior football again - and he's still looking for a full match.

The two players faced each other a few weeks ago in a thrilling local derby that netted eight goals. Colosimo played 75 minutes and scored once.

Curcija scored twice in the match that South Melbourne won 5-3.

"The knee is fine. It's still not 100 per cent, but it's enough to play on. I pulled up fine after the match and the main thing now is to get a whole game in. It's important I started playing a full game," Colosimo said.

Olyroos coach Raul Blanco watched the game and although impressed with Colosimo's progress, he was guarded about his prospects.

"I was encouraged by what I saw, but he's got a long way to go yet and we'll have to keep looking at him," Blanco commented.

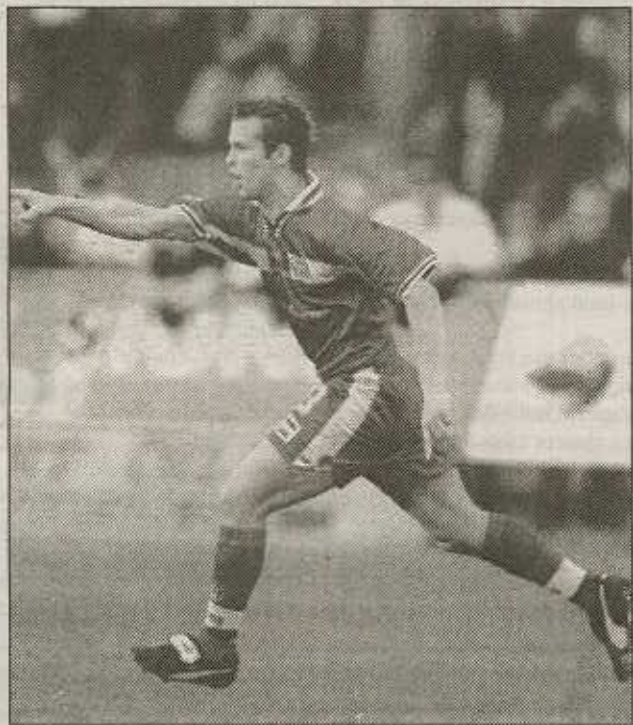
"As it gets closer, it'll get a lot harder. But as long as I keep playing well, it's something for Blanco to consider," Curcija summed up his own chances.

Curcija was also at Olympic Park last year. "We ran out of space a bit, but here's lots of space and there are more kids here today. It goes to show what the clubs and the VSF can do when they work together," he said.

Melbourne Knights players Paul Magdic and Zeljko Susa were also impressed with the activities at the 'G.

"I can't recall having clinics when I was a kid. Not until I was 16 anyway," Magdic said.

Susa, who came to Melbourne from Canberra Deakin and the



Michael Curcija: "A great idea."



Simon Colosimo: Recovering from injury but still with plenty of time for the kids.

Australian Institute of Sport, and made his Olyroo debut in 1998, drooled over the magnificent setting.

"The MCG is a great pitch. There's nothing better in the world than your home ground and playing in your home town and hopefully playing for your country," he said.

VSF chief executive Geoff Miles looked satisfied with the day's result.

"We got a few more kids than last year. It's a fantastic opportunity for the boys and the girls to meet the players. For many of them, it's also the first time they've walked on the MCG," Miles said.

"A lot of the children will also sign up for our Goalkick program. It's a good opportunity to get straight into the sport. It's a skill-based program over 12 weeks for boys and girls between five and 10 years old.

They get a certificate at the end," he said.

**FULL CLINIC
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NEXT WEEK**

Victorian Soccer Federation Eat Well Live Well PREMIER LEAGUE 2000

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Green Gully Cavaliers	11	9	1	1	25	7	28
Bentleigh Greens	11	6	2	3	19	12	20
St Albans Saints	11	5	3	3	22	14	18
Altona East Phoenix	11	5	3	3	14	13	18
Altona Magic	11	4	4	3	13	14	16
Preston Lions	11	3	4	4	13	15	13
Oakleigh Cannons	11	3	4	4	17	20	13
Bulleen Zebras	11	3	3	5	15	19	12
Melbourne Raiders	11	2	5	4	11	15	11
Port Melbourne Sharks	11	3	2	6	18	23	11
Fawkner Blues	11	2	4	5	10	16	10
Heidelberg United	11	3	1	7	14	23	10

Leading Goalscorers

Name	Team	Goals
Alfonso Opazo	Heidelberg United	6
Saso Markovski	Bentleigh Greens	6
Sash Becvinovski	Green Gully Cavaliers	5
Dimce Panev	Preston Lions	5
Ike Alagiozidis	Oakleigh Cannons	4
Nick Tsaltas	Port Melbourne Sharks	4

Round 12

Monday, 24 April 2000

(Easter Monday).

St Albans Saints v Altona Magic

Heidelberg United v Oakleigh Cannons

Bentleigh Greens v Port Melbourne Sharks

Sunday, 30 April, 2000.

Bulleen Zebras v Green Gully Cavaliers

Altona East Phoenix v Fawkner Blues

Monday, 1 May, 2000

Melbourne Raiders v Preston

**MORE
VICTORIAN
PREMIER
LEAGUE NEWS
PAGE 6**



NSW Soccer Federation

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— ROUND 16 —

DEMONS DEFEAT GALANT MANLY

**Blacktown City 2
Manly Warringah 1**

By Don O'Regan

Blacktown's 20-year-old striker Mark Hagger was both hero and villain in his team's 2-1 victory over Manly Warringah Dolphins in the NSW Super League Round 16 match at the Gabbie Stadium last Saturday night.

For the sixth match in succession his name appeared on the score sheet but an impetuous challenge in the 35th minute led to his fifth yellow card of the season and with it an automatic one-match suspension.

He will now miss the mouth watering, top-of-the-table, Anzac Day clash with Leichhardt Tigers at the Parramatta Stadium forcing his coach, Brian Brown, into another team re-shuffle.

In a first half dominated by the demons, Manly's central defender Steve Hickman was a tower of strength, holding his defence together as Blacktown threatened Dean McCreath in the Dolphins' goal on a number of occasions.

Naoki Iwaya, blasting over the bar from two metres out in the 18th minute, Hagger in the sixth and 13th minutes and Damien Brown in the 30th minute all went close before the irrepressible Hagger notched his 17th strike of the current campaign in the 37th minute.

Paul Dee raced down the right wing and picked out Iwaya with a short pass and, whilst

Jason Bennett made a near post run, drawing the Manly defence with him, Hagger ghosted towards the far post to drive home Iwaya's cross.

In reply, Manly only had one first-half effort of any note when their highly mobile forward, Mark Beldham, received a pass from Robert Smithies in the 27th minute and had his shot blocked by Blacktown keeper, Fernando Greco, only for Shane Webb to fire the rebound over the bar.

The Dolphins, thanks to the non-stop efforts of the aforementioned Beldham, raised their game in the second half and almost equalised in the first minute after the restart when Smithies' goal-bound shot was saved by Greco.

The only blemish on Hickman's performance for Manly occurred in the 72nd minute when he failed to judge the bounce of the ball and, tragically for the big-hearted defender it led to Blacktown's second goal.

As the ball lobbed past him, Zlatko Donev, Blacktown's recent signing from top Victorian Premier League side Green Gully Cavaliers, pounced on the mistake and steadied himself before coolly placing the ball wide of McCreath and into the bottom corner of the net.

The Dolphins redoubled their efforts to get back into the game and the ubiquitous Beldham, although not scoring, was responsible for their opening goal in the 81st minute when his blistering cross from the right cannoned off the Demons' Paul Dee and into the net past the bewildered Greco.

TIGERS HOUDINI ACT NO BULL

**Leichhardt Tigers 3
Fairfield Bulls 2**

By Joe Russo

It was certainly a game of two halves to use an old cliché but a very valid one to describe this game. The first half offered very little, while the second half had everything.

Leichhardt came back from a two goal deficit and full credit must go to the Tigers for not giving up. The visitors at Lambert Park will be very disappointed in letting go of a two-goal lead and, worse still, losing the game from that comfortable position.

Fairfield opened the scoring in the 60th minute with Borg who latched onto a cross by Omac and headed in past an advancing Tigers' keeper. Their second goal was almost a replay of the first. This time it was a Cavallaro cross in the 62nd minute that found Hoenselaars and he had the simple task of heading in past Woods in goal.

The Tigers, with grit and determination, hit back in the 65th minute. Bulls' keeper Pupovac could only parry a Bruni shot and Tomasevic was on the spot to head home the easy rebound.

In the 74th minute the Tigers drew even after excellent lead-up work ended with a precise Lansdown cross that found Bulgin. The blond haired replacement simply headed home to even the scores.

In the 86th minute it was a penalty that eventually allowed the Tigers to snatch victory. Luksic, just on the field, handled in his own area and Karavataki made no mistake from the penalty spot, sending the 'keeper in the wrong direction.

The Tigers had come from a near impossible position to win and obtain three valuable Super League points.

his back to goal. Bakis evaded two defenders with a lovely turn and fired in a low shot that gave Mikuletic no chance. This goal confirmed the result, one which Canterbury may feel a little hard done by.

Saints coach John Sentas was pleased to get another three points and, whilst happy with his whole side, singled out Simon Verrender, George Maglis and Bill Petrovski for praise.

"I thought we were the better side in general, especially in the second half. It was the best we have played since we lost at Bonnyrigg. So it was a good result today as we played well and won."

SAINTS DOWN BERRIES

**Canterbury-M'ville 0
St George 2**

By Julian Murphy

St George defeated Canterbury-Marrickville at Henson Park on Easter Sunday courtesy of two late goals and a solid defensive display. The 2-0 victory was the Saints third in the space of a week and keeps them firmly entrenched amongst the competition leaders.

The first half was a tight contest with very few chances for either side. In the 37th minute Jose Mendes did well to elude two defenders but then fired directly at the Saints custodian.

The visitors chances in this half were also few and far between with Jim Bakis volleying over the bar, Angelo Petratos heading wide and Elias Augerinos shooting across the face of goal.

The 0-0 half-time score line was thanks largely to the well organised defences of both sides. The Berries talented trio of Jim Nikas, Abbas Saad and Steve Christoforidis found it difficult to make any inroads past Michael Kladis and Nick Bolianitis. At the other end of the ground, Michael Raeburn and Adrian Molachino were performing admirably for the Berries.

St George began to dominate

possession in the second half, and as a result, Berries keeper Frank Mikuletic had to make some good saves to keep them in the game.

Yet, just past the hour mark, the home side almost grabbed the lead against the run of play. Saad dispatched a through ball into the penalty area only to see both Nikas and Christoforidis have shots blocked from close range.

Manuel Papageorgiou ended the deadlock in the 75th minute with his third goal in as many games. A rare defensive lapse by the Berries allowed an unmarked Papageorgiou to receive the ball on the edge of the box. He had plenty of time and space to place it past an advancing Mikuletic.

Papageorgiou turned provider 11 minutes later when his pass found strike partner Bakis with

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	15	11	0	4	42	27	15	33
Blacktown City Demons	15	10	2	3	43	14	29	32
St George Saints	16	10	2	4	31	20	11	32
Leichhardt Tigers	14	9	2	3	35	21	14	29
Parramatta Eagles	15	6	7	2	34	24	10	25
Central Coast Coasties	15	6	4	5	26	20	6	22
Canterbury Marrickville	16	7	0	9	25	36	-11	21
Bankstown City Lions	16	5	5	6	22	22	0	20
Eastern Suburbs	15	6	1	8	27	32	-5	19
Fairfield Bulls	15	5	3	7	24	26	-2	18
Macarthur Rams	15	3	5	7	18	24	-6	14
Penrith Panthers	14	4	1	9	14	35	-21	13
Sutherland Sharks	16	3	2	11	18	42	-24	11
Manly Warringah Dolphins	15	2	4	9	17	33	-16	10

RESULTS

Parramatta Eagles 1 (N Joseski) Sutherland Shire 1 (A Salim)

St George 3 (E Papageorgiou 10m B Petrovski 28m J Bakis 32m) Penrith Panthers 0

Leichhardt Tigers 3 (V Tomasevic 66m J Bulgin 78m S Karavataki 90m) Fairfield Bulls 2 (M Borg 62m M Hoenselaars 64m)

Central Coast Coasties 0 Bankstown City Lions 0 Blacktown 2 (M Hagger 38m Z Donev 72m) Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 (Own Goal 81m)

Sutherland Sharks 1 (C Paradisis 32m Penalty) Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 2 (C Sharpley 61m J Aschner 63m)

Macarthur Rams 1 (D Cummins 61m) Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 (C Luff 21/30m), Canterbury Marrickville Berries 0 St George Saints 2 (E Papageorgiou 75m J Bakis 86m)

UNDER 21: St George 1 Penrith Panthers 0 Leichhardt Tigers 5 Fairfield Bulls 2, Blacktown City Demons 6 Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Central Coast Coasties 5 Bankstown City Lions 0, Sutherland Sharks 1 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 3, Macarthur Rams 0 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3, Canterbury Marrickville Berries 3 St George Saints 0, Parramatta Eagles 0 Penrith Panthers 2.

UNDER 18: St George 2 Penrith Panthers 2, Leichhardt Tigers 1 Fairfield Bulls 0, Blacktown City Demons 1 Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Central Coast Coasties 1 Bankstown City Lions 0, Sutherland Sharks 3 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0, Macarthur Rams 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Canterbury Marrickville Berries 0 St George Saints 2, Parramatta Eagles 2 Penrith Panthers 2.

See page 10 for all other results

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION

Super League

Kick-off times — 3.00pm (1st Grade), 1.00pm (U21s), 11.00am (U18s) unless otherwise stated

SATURDAY 29 APRIL 2000

Bonnyrigg White Eagles v Canterbury Marrickville
Serbian Centre
(3pm U18s, 5pm U21s, 7pm 1st Grade)

Central Coast Coasties v Manly Warringah Dolphins
Pluim Park
(2pm U18s, 4pm U21s, 6pm 1st Grade)

SUNDAY 30 APRIL 2000

St George Saints v Parramatta Eagles
St George Stadium

Leichhardt Tigers v Macarthur Rams
Lambert Park

Penrith Panthers v Blacktown City Demons
Andrew Road Field

Bankstown City Lions v Sutherland Sharks
Jensen Park

Eastern Suburbs v Fairfield Bulls
Wentworth Park



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NORTHERN DIVISION (ROUND 30)

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Power	27	21	4	2	2	83	12	67
Northern Spirit	28	19	4	2	5	81	36	61
Sydney Olympic	28	18	5	2	5	83	38	59
Marconi Stallions	26	18	2	1	8	51	32	50
A.I.S.	28	15	4	2	9	81	38	49
Q.A.S.	27	15	3	2	9	77	46	48
Wollongong Wolves	27	12	5	2	10	41	40	41
Sydney United	27	13	1	2	13	45	53	40
A.C.T.A.S.	25	9	7	2	9	39	45	34
Newcastle Breakers Colts	28	10	2	2	16	50	85	32
Sydney Olympic Academy	28	10	2	2	16	50	85	32
N.S.W.I.S.	26	6	7	2	13	37	43	25
Marconi Stallions Colts	27	6	5	2	16	41	49	23
Northern Spirit Colts	28	5	6	2	17	28	64	21
Sydney United Colts	27	3	4	2	20	29	74	13
Wollongong Wolves Colts	27	1	2	2	24	15	121	5

ROUND 31

TUESDAY 25 APRIL 2000

Newcastle Breakers v A.C.T.A.S. (Rd 27)
(Breakers Stadium - 6.30pm)

LEADING SCORERS

Russell Miner	Q.A.S.	23
Daniel Severino	Marconi Stallions	19
Ryan Griffiths	Northern Spirit	16
Franco Parisi	A.I.S. (Sydney Olympic Academy)	13
Mark Tsiorlas	A.I.S. (V.I.S.)	13
Alex Brosque	Marconi Stallions Colts	12
Kevo Gulesserian	A.I.S. (Marconi Stallions)	12
Daniel Kukucka	Parramatta Power	12

SOUTHERN DIVISION (ROUND 21)

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlton	17	13	4	0	64	9	43
VIS	18	14	1	3	55	13	43
Bulleen Inter Kings	19	10	2	7	47	34	32
South Melbourne	16	10	1	5	44	15	31
Melbourne Knights	18	9	3	6	48	3	30
South Dandenong	18	9	3	6	37	31	30
Gippsland Falcons	18	7	4	7	38	40	25
Fawkner Blues	16	4	3	9	18	43	15
Melbourne Knights Academy	17	4	2	11	16	34	14
Albury Wodonga	18	2	3	13	19	63	9
Preston Lions	19	1	2	16	16	84	5

FORTHCOMING MATCHES

ROUND 20

MONDAY 24 APRIL 2000

Fawkner Blues v Albury Wodonga
(C.B. Smith Reserve, 3pm)

ROUND 21

TUESDAY 25 APRIL 2000

Carlton v South Dandenong
(Olympic Park, 5pm)

ROUND 21

THURSDAY 27 APRIL 2000

South Melbourne v Fawkner Blues
(Bob Jane Stadium, 7pm)

ROUND 2

SATURDAY 29 APRIL 2000

VIS v South Melbourne
(Grange Reserve, 3.30pm)

Gippsland Falcons v Fawkner Blues
(Falcons Stadium, 4pm)

SUNDAY 30 APRIL 2000

Melbourne Knights Academy v Preston Lions
(Knights Stadium, 4pm)

Melbourne Knights - Bye

ROUND 16

WEDNESDAY 3 MAY 2000

South Melbourne v Melbourne Knights Academy
(Venue to be arranged, 6.30pm)

LEADING SCORERS

Anthony Pelikan	Melbourne Knights	19
David Terek	V.I.S.	12
Peter Kakos	Gippsland Falcons	11
Adam Curcija	Bulleen	10
David Martin	Albury Wodonga	9
Angelo Moutsopoulos	Carlton	9
Andrew Mashoian	South Melbourne	9
Xhezair Sulimani	Bulleen/South Dandenong	9
Ace Stojcevski	Carlton	7
Evan Papadopoulos	V.I.S.	7

JUNIOR SOCCER

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New Star for Wollongong

Mennillo comfortable in the Wolves Den

By Mark Stavroulakis

A recent member of the Wolves den has emerged as being one of the best buys of the season.

Former Auckland Kings player Dino Mennillo has settled in nicely with his new family at Brandon Park.

A question that has been harassing Dino for quite some time now was the main reason why he left the Kingz.

"I left the Kingz because of financial problems. The club itself was great towards me, but when the money stops flowing in, then there are going to be problems and that's the main reason why I left them. Either way I enjoyed my spell at Auckland and made many good friends there," said Mennillo.

"The inclusion of the Kingz has boosted the popularity of soccer through New Zealand, and has also lifted the standards of play over there as well. The Kingz need a bit more time getting used to this, but will reap the success in a couple of years to come," said the former Adelaide City star.

Mennillo had a quite extensive view on two coaches whom he had the pleasure of being coached by. The first coach in the "hot seat" was former European whiz and Auckland coach Wynton Rufer.

"Wynton's experience having played in Europe, and having the good communication skills are all beneficial to young and old players at the Kingz. One thing I witnessed as a player under his guidance was the fact that his technical drills were the best sessions out, and that the players learnt a lot but enjoyed training at the same time," said Mennillo.

Lastly, he's view on his new coach the ever-influential Nick Theodorakopoulos. "Technically, Nick's one of the best coaches in the league, he's great with all his players and knows which players to recruit as he has an eye for winning.

Nick's reputation has grown immensely, as he thinks a lot about the games and is fully focussed on soccer. He puts a lot of thought into his game and that is one of the main reasons why I headed down the south express to Wollongong,"

stated Mennillo.

"I'm enjoying myself at the Wolves simply because the fans have helped me fit in. The players are great and have all shown respect towards me, and I for one hope that I can help the team in guiding them to a title come the end of the season.

I can say that the players at the Wolves are of high quality especially Matty Horsley and Scott Chipperfield who hold big futures in the game. The fans are great, the most important people in my mind are the fans, as to me I wouldn't want to move to any other club, the supporters make you a better player," said

Mennillo.

Little did people realise that the 24-year-old spent some time at the AIS, and he regarded it as the best experience ever. "Staying at the AIS really improved my game a lot. The top quality coaches at the place, the players such as Viduka, Skoko and Talay just to name a few were a pleasure to play with. I developed discipline as well, and I cherished the moment playing for the green and gold of Australia at the U20's championships in Qatar in '95, thanks dually to the AIS, as they helped me a lot in getting this achievement," said Mennillo.

One question that Mennillo felt was the first he'd ever answered was how did he feel playing the Kingz twice after his move from the club.

"Emotionally it was tough for me as I had left under those circumstances and I knew one thing that when I did play them that I expected to be belted around. I copped elbows, bad comments and was sore for two weeks after the matches against the Kingz, but I guess that's soccer and as a professional you have to deal with those things.

"Some Kingz players, mainly the older ones shook my hand and wished me well

at my new club after the match, while others had still to forgive my move to the Wolves. Scoring against them really did boost my confidence and I regarded it was one of the best feelings as it gave me a huge buzz," stated a relieved Mennillo.

Scoring on debut is something Mennillo recalls fondly.

"It was a great feeling scoring on my debut against UTS. The first thing I remember doing was turning to Nick and saying that was for you having faith in me, and it was just my way of saying thank you. It was also good scoring as I'm here for the team and I want to win, and to succeed in winning the championship. It relaxed me and also took a lot of pressure off me, but it was a goal I'll long remember," said a delighted Mennillo.

Mennillo has just finished a three-year course at University and gained an occupational therapist degree. He loves soccer, but he has also dedicated his life to education as he regards this as a big thing in life to have.

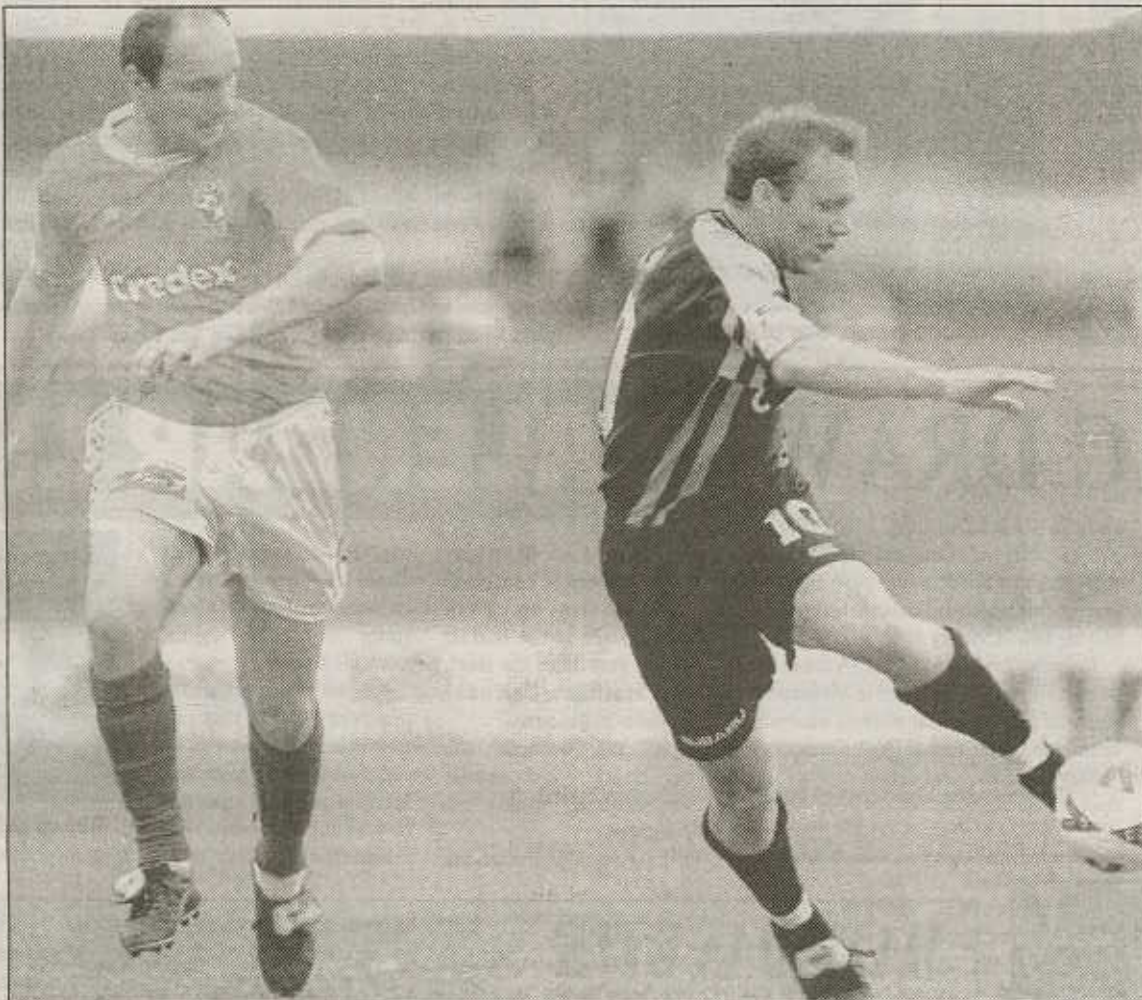
"Education is very important in life and I felt that I was at my best performance while I was studying at university. Apprentices in the National League to me, should be doing some sort of diploma in order to something extra to fall back on, after soccer's finished," stated Mennillo.

Finally Dino had this to say about the Wolves future aspirations for this year. "I believe the Wolves are capable of winning the league and the final this year. It all comes down to the day, whichever team performs well.

"To win the competition we must finish in the top two. This will be a big thing for the Wolves making the semis, as it will show the bigger clubs that we mean business. It's not money that drives success to a club, it's the players who love playing for the team," said Mennillo.

Apart from his soccer and education, he devotes the rest of his time to his family whom he regards as the people who he loves the most.

Also to his lovely girlfriend Michelle Scarsella who has been there for Dino in the hard times, and now can sit back and watch her man playing for the Wolves.



Dino Mennillo: Totally Devoted.

FAMOUS PHOTOS

Have you had your photo taken with someone famous in soccer? Even if it happened years ago, you can have the photo published in ABSW.

Send photos to:

The Editor

Australian and British Soccer Weekly

P.O. Box 155, Marrickville NSW 1475.

Or E-mail the photo in JPEG format to

soccerweekly@hotmail.com

**All photos will be returned*

SOCCER WOMAN

By Janene Mar

MATILDAS SMILE FOR TV

The world game. The Matildas are about to grace television screens across Japan as the fresh new face of leading toothpaste-cosmetics brand Apagard.

Eleven members of the Matildas feature throughout a high budget television commercial shot on the white sand dunes of a small fishing village north of Perth.

The finished product, viewed for the first time by the players last week, features stylised nudity with a soccer theme knitted into a fun and humorous story line.

Matildas captain Alison Forman, who plays a starring role in the advertisement, is enthusiastic about their newest venture, saying, "The entire squad loves the finished product. I think it's fair to say there has never been a commercial quite like this one."

It's the first ever time the Matildas have been chosen to head a commercial advertising campaign, and obviously has come as a result of the unexpected worldwide success and popularity of the



Alison Forman: Star of commercial.

Matildas Calendar.

Cosmetics company Sangi, makers of Apagard, feel the Matildas encapsulate the spirit of their catchphrase 'Vitality, Naturalness and Inner Strength', and will enhance Apagard's selling power.

The greatest outcome of the Calendar was how effectively it launched the name 'The Matildas' as a brand right across the mainstream community.

The athletes themselves are now able to experience the flow on financial benefits with such corporate interest as that of Sangi.

Revenue from the Apagard endorsement has been shared amongst all 24 members of the Matildas, the 11 who appear in the ad naturally receiving a larger cut of the money.

The two full days of filming took place during the squad's recent break from training, and proved to be tough work.

The unspoilt location, chosen for its pristine blue sunny skies and sparkling sand, failed to come to the party when the large crew (from Japan and around

Australia) and 'cast' arrived for its early morning start.

Overcast and windy conditions made the shoot anything but glamorous - make up and sand don't make for a good mix! The players toiled on and impressed the crew with their professional approach in such circumstances, and the shoot was finished on schedule.

The commercial has been very cleverly put together and is certain to delight the viewers. The Matildas appear to be nude, but the use of camera angles, shading and special effects makes the ad suitable for general television viewing.

The advertisement will air only on Japanese television, as Apagard is not available on the Australian retail market.

With consolidation of their marketability reinforced with some solid results on the pitch, hopefully this sort of corporate support and product endorsement will be first of many more for the Matildas.

OLYMPIC DRAW

The much-awaited Draw Ceremony for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Football Tournaments will be conducted on Saturday June 3 in Sydney.

The Draw will determine the make-up of pools and match schedules for both the women's and men's football Olympic events.

Unlike the men's, the eight teams to contest the women's event are already

known - Australia, USA, China, Brazil, Norway, Nigeria, Germany and Sweden. Australia is seeded in one pool and will play its first match in Canberra before then playing two in Sydney.

Reigning gold medallists USA are in the other pool and will be based in Melbourne. Just who plays who and when is what will be revealed in the formal Draw Ceremony.

Stay tuned for more details of what's in store for the big occasion.

CALENDAR LIVES ON

The Matildas Calendar continues to live on. Even now, closer to the middle of the year than the start, the Matildas Calendar remains in the news.

It has become the benchmark - the calendar to which all others are compared.

Last week's revelations

that the Australian Netball Team is producing a calendar has brought a wry smile to those within women's soccer.

Netball is a sport so far removed from that of women's soccer in terms of audience, global appeal, and need for publicity, one has to wonder the reasoning behind their decision.



Why try and replicate the huge success of the Matildas

Calendar when in reality it will be nothing like it in terms of image or looks, and is supposedly being done for different purposes.

The netties have reportedly signed a contract with the producers of the Matildas Calendar but have decided to appear in sportswear despite suggestions to do otherwise.

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MATILDAS WITH ALTITUDE

Eager to occasionally get away from their day in day out training environment in Canberra and take on different opponents, the Matildas will head to the Snowy for this Saturday's training match.

The Aussie girls will clash with men's side Cooma Tigers at Nijong Oval in Cooma this Saturday April 29, kicking off at 2pm.

ALICIA IN FAMOUS COMPANY



Alicia Ferguson: Beautiful.

"Beauty is more than skin deep. It's in the toss of a head, the gleam of an eye, the joy of a smile."

So says top-selling magazine 'Who Weekly' in introducing their '25 Most Beautiful People' feature last week.

Eighteen-year-old Matildas striker Alicia Ferguson takes her place amongst this year's showcase of Beautiful People.

Not only is Ferguson an enthralling talent on the football field. Her alluring and vibrant personality, fun sense of humour, professionalism and thoughtfulness, natural ability in front of a camera or audience, and fresh-face attractive looks have endeared her to many inside and outside of the sport.

Her selection as one of the Most Beautiful People is recognition of Ferguson as a role model individual, and also of the Matildas as a group.

Ferguson holds her own alongside big-time names, mostly from the entertainment industry.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE FOR 2000 ARE:

Tina ARENA	singer
Annette BENING	actress
Natalie BLOOM	Bloom cosmetics
Rose BYRNE	actress
Laetitia CASTA	model/actress
Lee Lin CHIN	newsreader
Penelope CRUZ	actress
Matt DAMON	actor
Eddie DENNIS	water polo
Alicia FERGUSON	soccer
Michael J FOX	actor
Brendan FRASER	actor
Katarina FREKETIC	gymnast
Heather GRAHAM	actress
Macy GRAY	singer
Angelina JOLIE	actress
Jude LAW	actor
Matthew LLOYD	AFL
Elle MACPHERSON	former model
Tobey MAGUIRE	actor
Paul MILLER	boxer
Frances O'CONNOR	actress
Dan PARIS	actor
Lauren POETSCHKA	hurdler



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XXXX LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	GF	AG	Pts
Brisbane City	10	8	1	1	2	6	25
Rochdale Rovers	10	6	1	3	20	13	19
Brisbane Lions	10	5	3	2	19	9	18
Wynnum	10	5	3	2	21	13	18
Gold Coast City	10	4	3	3	18	11	15
Ipswich Knights	10	4	-	6	13	14	12
Bundaberg Waves	10	3	2	5	8	18	11
Mt Gravatt	10	2	2	6	12	29	8
Taringa Rovers	10	1	4	5	9	19	7
Toowoomba United	10	1	3	6	7	17	6

ROUND 10

Mt Gravatt	2	Toowoomba United	1
Brisbane City	0	Gold Coast City	0
Taringa Rovers	1	Brisbane Lions	1
Rochdale Rovers	1	Ipswich Knights	0
Wynnum	4	Bundaberg Waves	1

DIVISION ONE SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	GF	AG	Pts
Eastern Suburbs	8	6	2	0	23	8	20
Olympic Utd	8	6	0	2	22	12	18
Capalaba	8	4	2	2	14	11	14
Acacia Ridge	8	3	3	2	16	16	12
Rocklea Utd	8	3	2	3	15	10	11
Souths Utd	8	2	4	2	20	9	10
Slacks Creek	8	2	2	4	8	20	8
Redlands Utd	8	1	1	6	10	20	4
Beenleigh	8	1	0	7	10	32	3

ROUND 9

Capalaba	1	Rocklea Utd	0
Olympic Utd	1	Acacia Ridge	2
Eastern Suburbs	3	Redlands Utd	2
Beenleigh	0	Souths Utd	9

Slacks Creek - bye

DIVISION ONE NORTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
North Star	8	6	0	2	23	9	18
Uni of Qld	8	6	0	2	25	13	18
Mitchelton	8	5	1	2	20	13	16
Pine Rivers Utd	8	5	1	2	17	11	16
North Pine	8	4	0	4	14	14	12
Newmarket	8	2	4	2	15	13	10
The Gap	8	3	0	5	12	18	9
Albany Creek	8	1	1	6	12	26	4
Grange Thistle	8	0	1	7	3	24	1

ROUND 9

Mitchelton	3	Albany Creek	1
North Star	0	Pine Rivers Utd	1
The Gap	1	Grange Thistle	0
North Pine	0	Uni of Qld	1

Newmarket - Bye

WYNNUM AND ROCHEDALE CLOSE GAP

As City Slip Up in Scoreless Draw At Gold Coast

By Glenn Davis

Wynnum and Rochdale Rovers closed the gap on frontrunners Brisbane City after contrasting wins in the first round of an Easter double in the Queensland premier league last Saturday.

While Wynnum easily accounted for the inconsistent Bundaberg 4-1 to move into equal third spot, Rochdale had to wait until the dying minutes to snatch a 1-0 away victory over Ipswich Knights.

Wynnum's win, courtesy of doubles from Mark Alaru and Scott Rocker, lifted the baysiders to 18 points with Brisbane Lions who



Wynnum's Mark Alaru: Double strike.

suffered a slip up drawing 1-1 with lowly placed Taringa Rovers.

Rochdale had to rely on a Matt Olley goal three minutes from time to leapfrog both Wynnum and Brisbane Lions into second place 19 points.

Brisbane City still held a comfortable six-point lead over Rochdale after the ninth round despite dropping points for only the second time this season in a scoreless draw with the Gold Coast.

At Eric Evans Reserve, Olley went from villain to hero for Rochdale after he struck the upright with an easy header inside the first minute before Ipswich keeper Jason Lucas

denied Olley with a point blank save on the half hour.

Olley eventually made up for his costly errors near the death when he joined Brisbane Lions' Sasa Radulovic as the league's leading scorers with his ninth goal of the season as he headed home an Alun Evans cross from the left.

The Rochdale-Ipswich clash featured several near chances from both sides, with some superb keeping from Rochdale's Graham Ross and Lucas.

Brisbane Lions, who went down 2-1 to Ipswich the previous round, had the majority of play against Taringa but for the second time this season were unable to walk with maximum points.

Lions' coach John Ogden believed his side had 70 per cent of the play but could not finish off their chances.

In an entertaining match, Lions' striker Royce Brownlie continued his fine form heading home the opening goal after 20 minutes.

Taringa, who lost several of their players and Ogden last season to Brisbane Lions, struck back with the equaliser midway through the second half.

A 30-metre long range shot from Shane Barnes deceived Lions' keeper Brett Dickens and bounced in after striking the underside of the crossbar.

Despite missing a golden chance to capitalise on Brisbane City's dropped point, Ogden believes there's no reason to panic.

"We lost last week after having a man sent off against Ipswich and I thought we were good enough to win against Taringa," Ogden said.

"At least we're creating chances but for some reason we're just not finishing off."

"They have to learn how to finish teams off."



Rochdale keeper Graham Ross: Superb performance secured the points.

ROUND 11 FIXTURES

April 24

B'berg Waves v Toowoomba Utd

2.45pm

Mt Gravatt v IPSW Knights

2.45pm

Rochdale Rov v Taringa Rovers

2.45pm

Brisbane Lions v Brisbane City

2.45pm

Wynnum v Gold Coast 2.45pm

ROUND 12

April 29

Wynnum v Brisbane Lions 7.00pm

April 30

Taringa Rovers v Mt Gravatt

2.45pm

Gold Coast v B'berg Waves

2.45pm

May 1

IPSW Knights v Toowoomba Utd

2.45pm

Brisbane City v Rochdale Rov

2.45pm

ITALIAN SERIE A

BOLOGNA 2

PERUGIA 1

Bologna secured a vital win which takes them clear of the relegation zone thanks to two goals in two minutes — the first from Giuseppe Signori in the 14th minute, the second from Swede Kennet Andersson.

Former Juventus striker Nicola Amoroso pulled a goal back before halftime.

INTER 3

BARI 0

Inter's first win in seven matches. "We needed these three points like bread," coach Marcello Lippi said afterwards.

Goals from French pairing Benoit Caulet and Laurent Blanc put Inter in control before Roberto Baggio scored his first goal in three months with a 50th minute strike from the edge of the box. Bari remain one place above the relegation zone.

JUVENTUS 1

FIorentina 0

Alessandro Del Piero converted a penalty with the last kick of the first half after Gianluca Zambrotta had been tripped by Alessandro Pierini.

That was enough to keep Juve five points clear with three matches to play. All of Del Piero's eight goals this season have come from the spot. Fiorentina have not won at Juve since 1988.

LECCE 2

CAGLIARI 1

A rare double from midfielder Claudio Bonomi gave Lecce a crucial win which lifts them seven points clear of the drop zone.

Cagliari, relegated last week, scored a consolation goal through Bernardo Corradi.

PIACENZA 0

LAZIO 2



Diego Simeone: Scored Lazio's first goal in their 2-0 win over Piacenza.

A victory which keeps Lazio's title dream alive. Diego Simeone broke the deadlock with a fine header in the 59th minute, two minutes after he had come on as a substitute.

Juan Veron calmed Lazio's nerves with a second strike from a superb free kick in the 68th.



Roberto Baggio: Scored his first goal in three months as Inter defeated Bari 3-0.

REGGINA 1

AC MILAN 2

Spain's Jose Mari returned from injury to put Milan ahead after just six minutes and then set up Andriy Shevchenko in the 14th for Milan's second.

Reggina, pushing for a place in the Intertoto Cup in only their first Serie A campaign, pulled one back through an Andrea Pirlo freekick.

AS ROMA 0

PARMA 0

Brazilian midfielder Assuncao hit a post with a free kick but otherwise there was little to entertain a 58,000-strong crowd on a sun-drenched afternoon at the Olympic Stadium.

Roma captain Francesco Totti was booked for a foul on Lilian Thuram and will miss Roma's next tie against Bari.

UDINESE 0

TORINO 0

Disappointing draw which nevertheless pushes Udinese closer to a UEFA Cup place for the fourth year in a row.

Torino, bought out by a new owner in midweek, got the point they were looking for but remain four points adrift in the relegation zone.

VENEZIA 2

VERONA 2

Goals from Croatian Igor Budan and Maurizio Ganz looked to have given the Venice side a win which might have given them a chance of salvation.

But Brazil's Adailton and Emiliano Salvetti struck twice in the last six minutes to give Verona a point and extend their unbeaten run to an amazing 12 matches before their home tie against Juventus next week.



Action from the Roma vs Parma match which ended 0-0.

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

Arrivederci Europe! Lazio were the last Italian hope in Europe this season and their 1-0 home win in Rome last week over Valencia, was not enough to cancel out their 2-5 first leg deficit and advance to the semi-finals of the Champions League.

Italian teams have a lot of soul-searching to do and a major improvement is required, and certainly expected, by all fans of Italian club football. It is a long way from their halcyon days of a few years ago, when Italian clubs virtually dominated European club competitions.

To make matters worse, Chelsea, the multicultural team with an Italian flavour that masquerades as an English club, was also eliminated.

Chelsea is the Italian football fan's team away from home, given their obvious connections starting with Manager Gianluca Vialli and players such as Zola, Di Matteo and Casiraghi (long-term injured). Furthermore, others such as French stars Desailly and Deschamps have had long playing stints in Italy as well.

On the whole, it just wasn't to be the year for Italian clubs in Europe and the 'writing was on the wall' from the time AC Milan was unceremoniously eliminated from the Champions League and then the UEFA Cup.

Looking at the statistics of the Serie A after 30 rounds is most interesting indeed.

Juventus, soon to be crowned champions, have an amazing defensive record. They have conceded only 17 goals!

Their attack was bettered by six other teams, however, their defence had conceded 12 goals less than their nearest rivals. The main defensive trio is comprised of: Paolo Montero, the Uruguayan international, Mark Iuliano and Ciro Ferrara, both of whom are Italian internationals.

It is the latter name that is most interesting. Ferrara has an amazing five, and soon it will be six, Italian Serie A titles under his belt. He won the 'Scudetto' twice with his former club Napoli (87 and 90) and three times so far with Juventus (95, 97 and 98). At 33 years old, he is football's equivalent to a good wine.

Marco Simone, the former Milan, Paris Saint Germain and Italian striker, has helped Monaco win the French league title and there are still a couple of rounds left.

Simone, who split acrimoniously last year with PSG, eventually made a name for himself at Milan having played there from 1989 to 1997. His main competition for a place in the starting lineup, was none other than Dutch legend, Marco Van Basten.

Somehow, while this was going on, Simone even managed to make three appearances for the Italian national team. Ah yes, Arrigo Sacchi, was an amazing national team boss indeed!

Cagliari, Piacenza and Venezia will all be relegated at the end of the season, leaving only one more relegation spot to be filled.

Torino, Bari and Lecce will all be fighting to avoid the drop. Torino, once the greatest club teams in the world (see 1945 to 1949), may return to the Serie B after only one season in the top flight. That would be a shame, however, a minor miracle is needed on their behalf if they are to survive. (Torino Sold - see page 27)

Bari and Lecce are both from the southern Italian region of Puglia and are the most bitter of rivals. Each would love to see the other relegated but, this is something that may not occur to either of them if the status quo is maintained.



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

ASTON VILLA 2

LEICESTER CITY 2

Villa have now not beaten their midlands rivals in 12 games, following this tight battle.

Alan Thompson drilled Villa ahead after 31 minutes but Leicester equalised when a Gareth Barry miskick gave Matt Elliott a chance he could not miss six minutes later.

Paul Merson restored Villa's lead with a diving header three minutes after the break but Neil Lennon equalised again in the 67th minute.

CHELSEA 1

M'BORO 1

Uruguayan midfielder Gustavo Poyet had one header disallowed after five minutes but there was no doubt four minutes later when he headed home a Dennis Wise corner for his 16th goal of the season.

Boro equalised when Hamilton Ricard was left unmarked close in after a corner in the 37th minute.

Chelsea hit the post as they piled forward in the second half but the result is a severe dent to their hopes of a top three finish.

SHEFF WED 0

SUNDERLAND 2

Heartbreak for Wednesday, battling for their Premier League lives, as two Kevin Phillips goals in the last five

minutes gave Sunderland the points.

Wednesday, seeking a third successive win in their battle against the drop, poured forward but were unable to find the finishing touch.

Phillips showed them how it should be done when he fired in from the edge of the box in the 86th minute and then rattled in his 29th of the season in the last minute.

SOUTHAMPTON 1

MAN. UNITED 3

United clinched the league title after cruising to a 3-0 lead in the first half hour.

David Beckham settled any United nerves with a trademark curling free kick after seven minutes and when Francis Benali deflected a Phil Neville cross into his own goal eight minutes later the celebrations could start early.

Solskjaer then collected a pinpoint Beckham pass to make it 3-0 after half an hour.

Saints were far more competitive after the break and grabbed a deserved consolation though Marian Pahars seven minutes from time.

TOTTENHAM 2

WIMBLEDON 0

Chris Armstrong fired home his seventh goal in eight games after eight minutes and Darren Anderton flicked in the second after 36 minutes.

With David Ginola running the show from central midfield Tottenham were



Manchester United celebrate after becoming English Champions following their 3-1 win over Southampton.

never threatened.

Wimbledon offered little in attack and their seventh successive defeat leaves them facing a huge relegation battle against Bradford next week.

WEST HAM UTD 5

COVENTRY CITY 0

Coventry's hopes of securing their first away win of the season disappeared early as Michael Carrick put West Ham ahead from 25 metres after seven minutes and Javier Margas doubled the lead with a header seven minutes later.

Man-of-the-match Paolo Di Canio made it 3-0 with a 20-metre shot and claimed his second in 67th. Frenchman Fred Kanoute headed the fifth seven minutes from time.

BRADFORD CITY 4

DERBY COUNTY 4

Dean Windass hit a first half hat-trick for Bradford but 10-man Derby hit back for a vital draw in an extraordinary game.

Derby led 2-0 after six minutes through Rory Delap and Branko Strupar but had Delap sent off and trailed 4-3 at halftime as Peter Beagrie added a penalty to Windass's treble.

Craig Burley added a second penalty to his first-half spot kick — he also missed one 10 minutes from time — to earn Derby a point that probably secures their top-flight status.

EVERTON 0

LIVERPOOL 0

Liverpool's run of five successive wins came to an end with a typically bruising Merseyside derby.

In a frenetic game of few chances, Michael Owen twice went close for Liverpool while Mark Hughes shot wide when clean through for Everton in the second half.

Everton thought they had won it in injury time when a free kick by Liverpool keeper Sander Westerveld cannoned off the back of Don Hutchison as he walked away and looped into the net.

However, the referee disallowed the goal and said later he had blown for full time before it rolled over the line.

NEWCASTLE UTD 2

LEEDS UTD 2

Leeds raced into a 2-0 lead when Michael Bridges seized on a Nikos Dabizas error to score after two minutes and a Jason Wilcox cross went straight in after 17.

But Newcastle hit back seven minutes later with an Alan Shearer header after a good cross by Didier Domi and the England striker secured the point from point blank range three minutes after the break.

Ian Harte missed a 60th minute penalty for Leeds after Nikos Dabizas hauled down Harry Kewell. Leeds have now

gone eight matches without a win, six of them defeats.

WATFORD 2

ARSENAL 3

Thierry Henry continued his rich vein of form when he latched onto an Emmanuel Petit pass after 18 minutes for his 22nd goal of the season and banged in Arsenal's third in first half injury time for his 23rd.

In between he set up Ray Parlour for Arsenal's second as the Gunners chalked up their ninth successive win in all competitions.

Watford struck back with two goals in a minute with Heidar Helguson (58) and Micah Hyde (59) scoring but are all but relegated after one season in the top flight.



Gustavo Poyet: Celebrates scoring against Middlesbrough however the smiles turned sour for the Blues as the game ended 1-1.



Robbie Fowler: Made his long awaited return against Everton. The game was a dour affair ending in a controversial 0-0 draw.



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



— Quarter Finals —

Bayern pushed to the limit

Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld paid tribute to Porto's courage after his men needed a goal in injury time to beat the Portuguese champions 2-1 to reach the Champions League semi-finals.

"Porto played with our nerves," Hitzfeld said after a dramatic 3-2 triumph on aggregate. "They proved they are a top team by taking many risks



Bayern's Elber and Porto's Nelson tangle in their quarter-final match. Bayern won 2-1 on the night and 3-2 on aggregate.

and putting us under pressure."

Bayern went into the last minute of the quarter-final second leg leading 1-0 but Brazilian striker Mario Jardel equalised with a header from close range following a swift counter-attack.

Extra time was looming when defender Thomas Linke headed home virtually on the final whistle.

"Luck was not on our side," said Porto coach Fernando Santos.

"We came here and wanted to win the game and did everything we had to, but unfortunately we didn't finish off the three or four chances we had, much like in the first leg."

Bayern had gone ahead in the 15th minute through Brazilian Paulo Sergio and seemed in control until the closing stages. But Jardel, now the top scorer in this season's Champions League with 10 goals, caught their defence off guard.

The Bavarians still believe they can become the first German club to win the treble of Champions League and domestic league and cup titles in one season.

Champions Out

Real Madrid ended Manchester United's reign as European champions with a stunning 3-2 victory at Old Trafford to become the third Spanish club through to the semi-finals of the Champions League.

Two goals from Raul in the space of three minutes early in the second half following a Roy Keane own goal after 20 minutes had Real 3-0 ahead with 52 minutes played. Following the 0-0 draw in the first leg, the tie was all but over.

United gave the scoreline some respectability with David Beckham scoring with a superb shot that gave 18-year-old goalkeeper Iker Casillas no chance after 65 minutes and Paul Scholes converting an 89th minute penalty after Steve McManaman brought down Keane in the box.

But those goals could not save United from losing at home for the first time in 39 matches since Middlesbrough beat them by the same score in a Premier League game in December

McManaman, Fernando Morientes and Raul in attack and teenager Casillas in goal.

McManaman, who rarely had a good game at Old Trafford when he was at Liverpool, was inspirational, running at the defence, spreading the play and producing the pass of the night which set up Raul for Real's decisive second after 50 minutes.

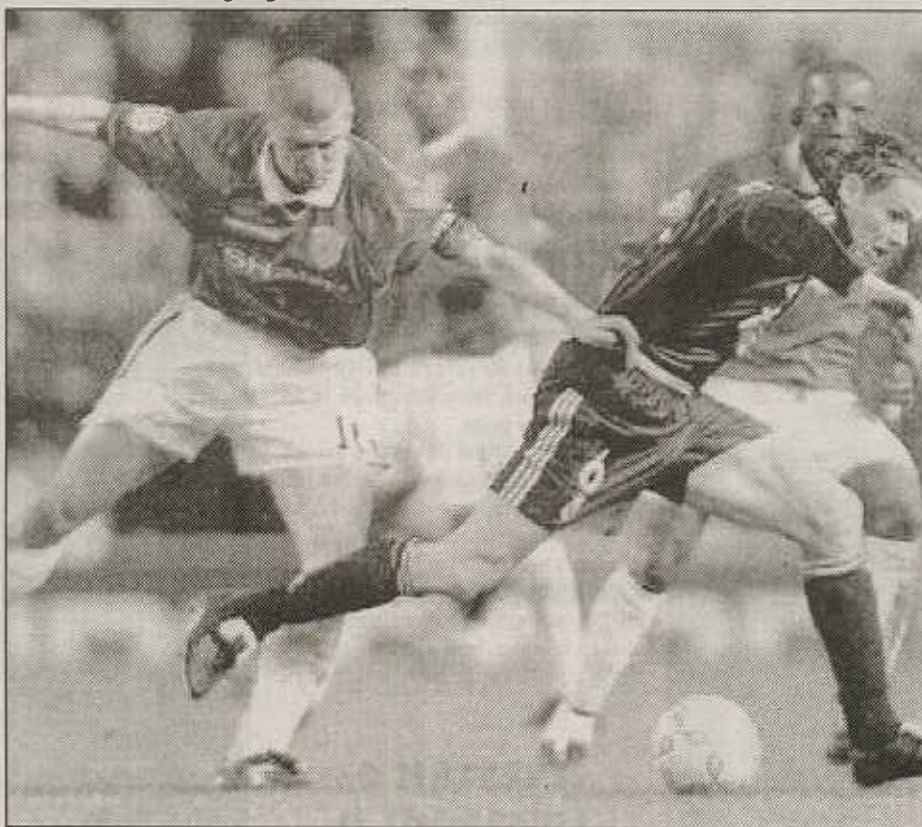
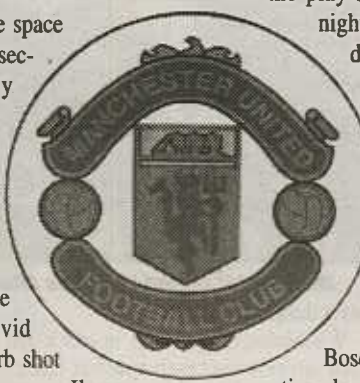
Old Trafford was stunned into near silence — apart from the cheers from about 200 Real fans, ecstatic at witnessing an historic victory, that was little undermined by United's late fight-back.

Real coach Vicente del Bosque, who had shown little emotion during the match, was dealing in superlatives at the end.

"That was an absolutely brilliant victory," said Del Bosque.

"Our players showed extraordinary application throughout.

"When Manchester United have the ball the sensation is always one of imminent danger but we were excellent in defence and used the ball



Real's Fernando Redondo slides past Man. United's Roy Keane at Old Trafford.

1998. Nor could they disguise the fact that Real teased and tormented United for most of the first hour going forward — and gave them a lesson in defensive discipline at the back.

It was only United's fourth home defeat in Europe since they first played in the European Cup in 1956.

Real's victory was built on a dazzling midfield performance from former Liverpool favourite

well to create chances.

Real's two-goal hero Raul Gonzalez added: "We can now start dreaming of an all-Spanish final in Paris.

United boss Alex Ferguson said: "It was a shock but they did play very well.

"We had a lot of great attacking play but you just have to accept it wasn't our night."

Rivaldo, Kluivert star in thrilling Barcelona win

Rivaldo came back from missing one penalty to rifle in a second in extra-time as Barcelona beat Chelsea 5-1 for a 6-4 aggregate success in a classic Champions League quarter-final.

Rivaldo's second spot pick, after he had missed the first five minutes before the end of normal time, followed a desperate challenge from Celestine Babayaro on Luis Figo that resulted in the Nigerian defender's sending-off.

Patrick Kluivert then nodded in a cross from Dani Garcia on 103 minutes to seal an historic comeback for the Catalans.

Barca, trailing 3-1 from the first leg, roared back into the tie with first-half goals from Rivaldo, with a deflected free kick, and Luis Figo.

Chelsea hauled themselves back into the lead on aggregate with a poacher's goal from Tore Andre Flo, the Norwegian latching onto a weak clearance from Ruud Hesp and gratefully smashing in on 60 minutes.

Barca came back through substitute Dani Garcia, who headed down and in from a Figo free kick.

Louis van Gaal's side, cheered on by a 98,000 full house sensing a European Cup comeback to rank with victories over Gothenburg in 1986 and Dynamo Kiev in 1993, pressed still harder and would have won the game on 85 minutes but for Rivaldo's spot-kick miss.

But the Brazilian atoned for his error early in the first period of extra-time to clinch an emotional victory that sets up an all-Spanish semi-final against Valencia.

Valencia coach hails "Italian-style" victory over Lazio



Hector Cuper: The heroic Valencia coach.



WORLD

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



— Quarter Finals —



Barcelona celebrate an amazing victory.

Valencia coach Hector Cuper hailed an "Italian-style" victory after his side restricted Lazio to a 1-0 win in Rome and went through to their first ever European Cup semi-final 5-3 on aggregate.

"I'm very happy," the Argentine coach said.

"We've gone through despite being drawn against a formidable side. I think the way we went through tonight was heroic. I think I can say we defended "Italian-style".

wise the visiting defence and inspired goalkeeper Santiago Canizares held firm.

"Our objective is to reach the final and win it," Cuper said. "But we've got a long way to go and, if I'm not mistaken, we're facing Barcelona next."

Cuper was coach of the Real Mallorca side which lost to Lazio in last season's Cup Winners' Cup final but he said he did not regard the aggregate win as revenge.

"The result of last year's match was very fair



The disconsolate Chelsea bench seeing a 3-1 lead overturned into a 6-4 defeat on aggregate.

Italian clubs have built up a reputation over the past decade for winning two-leg encounters by grinding out low scoring results on away turf while trouncing their opponents at home.

Valencia followed their model, mauling Lazio 5-2 in their Mestalla stadium two weeks ago and then defending as if their lives depended on it in the return.

Juan Veron scored Lazio's goal with a thunderous right-foot shot in the 52nd minute but other-

and this year's matches have nothing to do with that game. We've seen a great Valencia at the Mestalla and great resistance here," he said.

Lazio's defeat ended Italian interest in the European cups.

"I don't think the Italian defeats in Europe lower the standings of the Italian league in the eyes of the world," Cuper said, adding that he would like to coach in Serie A.

Vialli reflects on Chelsea's "human failings"

Chelsea coach Gianluca Vialli defended his players for their "human failings" in the epic Champions League quarter-final, which saw Barcelona overturn a 3-1 defeat from the first leg to win 5-1 after extra time at the Nou Camp and 6-4 on aggregate.

Vialli had promised before the game that his side would not just sit on their lead and would instead look to attack the Catalans from the start.

That plan was consigned to the scrapheap as Barca tore at the Premier League side, making good the deficit inside the opening 45 minutes.

The philosophical Italian coach said his side's inability to pressure the home side in the first period was understandable, though, and praised the players for fighting back.



Down and out: Man United's Dwight Yorke tackles Real's Dorado. The champions were eliminated by a Rampant Real.

"I think it's only human to think about defending more than attacking when you're winning 3-1 from the first game," Vialli reflected.

"It's difficult to say why we didn't really play football in the first half but we realised at halftime that we couldn't go on like that and we came back to take the lead."

"Myself and the players are very disappointed," Vialli admitted.

"We came so close to going through. Remember, they only equalised near the end of the 90 minutes.

"But I think we have to be proud of ourselves for what we've achieved this year, our first season in the Champions League.

"We've given Barcelona, one of the best teams in the competition, a great game.

SEMI-FINALS

FIRST LEG — May 3
SECOND LEG — May 10

Valencia v Barcelona

First leg - Tuesday, May 2, in Valencia

Second leg - Wednesday, May 10, in Barcelona

Real Madrid v Bayern Munich

First leg - Wednesday, May 3, in Madrid

Second leg - Tuesday, May 9, in Munich

THE RESULTS

In Manchester:

Manchester United 2 Real Madrid 3

Real Madrid won 3-2 on aggregate

Scorers: Manchester United - David Beckham 65, Paul Scholes 89pen

Real Madrid - Roy Keane 20og, Raul Gonzalez 50, 53

Halftime: 0-1; Attendance: 59,178

In Munich:

Bayern Munich 2 Porto 1

Bayern Munich won 3-2 on aggregate

Scorers: Bayern Munich - Paulo Sergio 15, Thomas Linke 90

Porto - Mario Jardel 89

Halftime: 1-0; Attendance: 47,000

In Rome:

Lazio 1 Valencia 0

Valencia won 5-3 on aggregate

Scorer: Juan Veron 52

Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 60,000

In Barcelona:

Barcelona 5 Chelsea 1 - after extra time

Barcelona won 6-4 on aggregate

Scorers:

Barcelona - Rivaldo 24, 99pen, Luis Figo 45, Dani 83,

Patrick Kluivert 105

Chelsea - Tore Andre Flo 60

Red card: Celestine Babayaro (Chelsea) 98

Halftime: 2-0; 90 minutes: 3-1; Attendance: 98,000

FINAL

Wednesday, May 24
At Stade de France



AVERAGE PREMIER LEAGUE PLAYER EARNS \$1 MILLION

The average soccer player in the English Premier League pockets an annual salary in excess of 400,000 pounds (\$1 million) a year, according to a survey published last week.

The poll by The Independent newspaper highlights the gulf in wages between players in England's top division and the lower leagues.

The survey says the average basic pay excluding sponsorship deals and endorsements for a Premier League player over the age of 20 is 409,000 pounds a year, or nearly 8,000 pounds a week.

In contrast, a similar player in the third division,

the lowest of England's four professional soccer leagues, earns on average 37,000 pounds (\$92,000) a year.

The paper notes that a top Premier League player now takes home more than twice as much as British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Barry Horne, chairman of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) rejected suggestions that players were earning too much.

"Football is a short career and you can justify the salaries quite comfortably. Compared to golfers, tennis players and others within the wider world of

entertainment, footballers salaries are not astronomical," he said.

But Horne added he was concerned about the gulf between salaries at the leading clubs and those lower down.

"Our worry is that so much money has come into the game and is not staying in the wider game, not filtering down to the lower leagues either through a direct negotiated deal or via transfer fees.

"So much is going out, to agents and to foreign clubs."

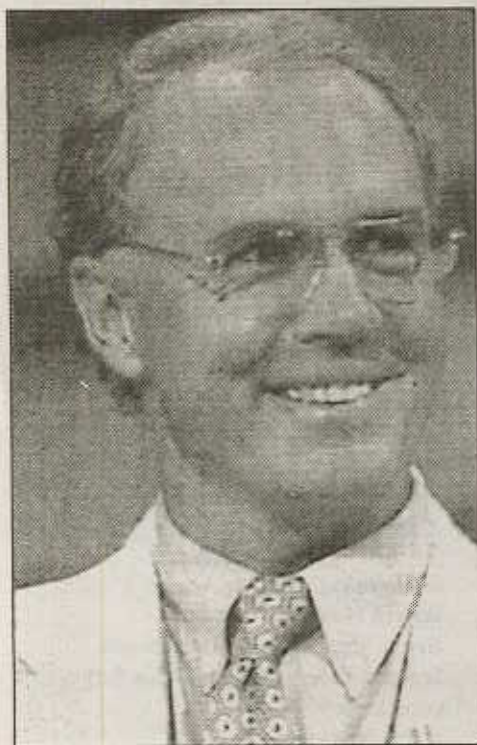
The survey was sent to every professional in the

country with nearly 600 players responding on a confidential basis.

The explosion in players' wages is largely a result of the 1995 Bosman ruling which gave out-of-contract EU players freedom of movement and effectively allowed them to pocket what would once have been the transfer fee paid by one club to another.

Lucrative television deals have also increased the flow of cash into the higher echelons of the game.

GERMAN SOCCER AT "ROCK BOTTOM" - BECKENBAUER



Franz Beckenbauer

German soccer is at "rock bottom", according to the country's former World Cup-winning captain and coach Franz Beckenbauer.

Beckenbauer, who heads Germany's bid for the 2006 World Cup, joined fellow former national team captain Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in painting a depressing picture of the state of the game of the European champions less than two months before they defend their trophy at Euro 2000.

"Our football, at the moment, is at rock bottom," Beckenbauer said in an interview.

In a separate interview Rummenigge added: "German football is at a crossroads. I am very worried about it. It has been going downhill for 10 years."

Germany coach Erich Ribbeck has come under fire in recent weeks after some disappointing performances from the European champions. He has often been accused of being too passive.

But Beckenbauer gave Ribbeck his support. "He has done a good job up until now," said Beckenbauer who captained West Germany to their 1974 World Cup triumph and coached them to victory in the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

But in the decade since then, says Beckenbauer, matters have got worse and he hit out at their skill level.

"The Dutch, like Edgar Davids, are better trained and enjoy it all," he said. "We Germans haven't got the most simple of dribbles in our repertoire anymore. We have a lack of talent."

Rummenigge added: "We are investing in quantity instead of quality."

EU stands firm on Bosman ruling

The European Commission shot down a proposal by UEFA president Lennart Johansson to limit the number of foreign players that clubs can field and again rebuffed calls to change the Bosman ruling.

Viviane Reding, Europe's commissioner for sport, said after a meeting of about 50 sports federations that she believed UEFA now accepted the Commission cannot change the 1995 ruling which ended constraints intended to keep the clubs' national identity.

She deflected a suggestion by Johansson that clubs should be obliged to select at least six nationals and restrict the number of imported players to five. "The six plus five idea is simply not possible and I think federations have got that message, and that includes UEFA," Reding said.

"What we saw (at the meeting with sports federations) was people accepting the reality of the Bosman ruling, and I think this goes for UEFA too."

The 1995 ruling in the European Court of Justice turned European soccer on its head by lifting restrictions on the number of foreign players allowed in

each team and outlawing transfer fees for players who are out of contract.

Small clubs say they now have little incentive to train youngsters if they simply lose them to big clubs without any financial reward, and some national federations fear the influx of foreign players limits opportunities for home-grown talent.

A delegation including senior officials from UEFA and FIFA visited the European Parliament last week to seek changes in European Union law. Reding said she believed the visit had shown them how strictly the law would be applied.

"I think it opened a lot of people's eyes to the fact that the (EU) treaties are what they are, that they have to be respected and that they apply to the world of sport just as much as to anyone else," she said.

Reding reiterated that the Commission, the EU's executive, was prepared to consider "the most appropriate" ways to encourage training and to examine ways to financially offset the investment a club makes in training a youngster who then leaves.

She also condemned soccer hooliganism, but said it was primarily a problem for national authorities.

Reding was speaking after a meeting which she said had opened a new partnership with the sporting world.

She underlined the need to step up the fight against drugs in sport to protect athletes' health and maintain the credibility of competitive sport.

She said the European Commission planned to provide 15 million euros (\$14.35 million) over the next few months to help fund research to combat the use of drugs in sport, but gave no details.

ANELKA SHOULD HAVE STAYED - WENGER

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has said he believes France striker Nicolas Anelka should have stayed with the London premier division club instead of moving to Real Madrid.

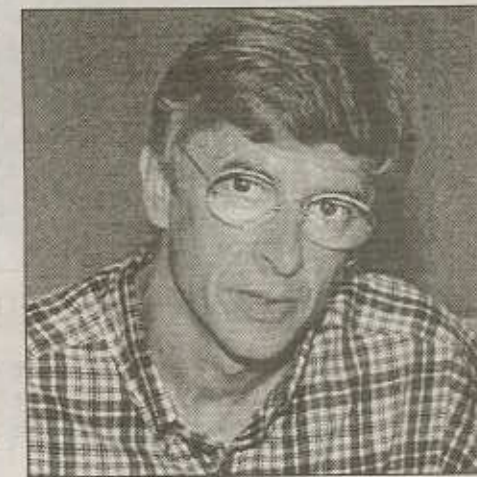
"I think Nicolas left us too early. I wanted to keep him here. I believe you can lead a player's life in Arsenal unlike anywhere else," Wenger told the French sports daily l'Equipe.

"You're more protected here, more isolated. On a daily basis, a player comes to train, goes back home and that's it."

Wenger, who hired the then unknown Anelka from Paris St Germain and turned him into one of the most promising strikers in Europe, said the fact he had a French manager in Arsenal had also helped.

"He talked of pressure from the British press, but I can't believe he left because of that," he said.

"Generally speaking, his reputation is unfair. He's just a honest person who says everything he means, without sometimes realising the consequences of what



Arsene Wenger: Anelka left too early.

he says."

Anelka has scored only three goals in his first season with Real and was briefly suspended for refusing to train.

Hundred up for Raul

Raul Gonzalez's match-winning penalty against Real Zaragoza last week was the striker's 100th Spanish league goal for Real Madrid.

The 22-year-old, in his sixth year as a first-teamer at the Spanish giants, showed characteristic cool to score from the spot with five minutes to go of a tense match between the two title-challenging sides.

Raul made his debut for Real at the age of 17 early in the 1994-95 season, after being plucked from the club's third team by then coach Jorge Valdano.

He managed nine goals in that first season before really hitting form in the following two years, scoring 19 in 1995-96 and 21 the following year.

A mini-slump followed in the subsequent campaign as he managed only 10 but he returned to full form last season as his 25 goals made him the Spanish league's leading goalscorer.

The only goal in Saturday's game against Real Zaragoza took his tally for the season to 16 - and

brought up the hundred for the Madrid-born striker. To celebrate he scored twice in the Champions League quarter final at old Trafford to knock out champions Manchester United 3-2.



Raul Gonzalez: Hits the ton.



Hagi honoured with stadium

The Farul Stadium in the Black Sea port of Constanta will be re-named after international soccer midfielder Gheorghe Hagi, Romania's sports ministry said last week.

Independent news agency Mediafax quoted ministry officials as saying that the announcement would be made before the Romania v Cyprus friendly, which will be played in Hagi's hometown of Constanta.



Gheorghe Hagi: Huge honour.

Hagi, aged 35 and now playing for Turkey's Galatasaray, made his debut at the local Farul Constanta club, who are now fighting relegation to the Second Division.

TORINO SOLD

Italian First Division club Torino, one of the fallen giants of Serie A, said last week it had been bought by a local businessman for a reported fee of 35 billion lire (\$17.11 million).

"They've bought a 98.55 percent stake — everything that was held by the previous owners," a Torino spokesman said, referring to the holding company SIS owned by Turin industrialist Franco Cimminelli.

The club's new owner is expected to try to float the club on the Milan bourse and renovate the derelict Filadelfia Stadium, scene of some of Torino's greatest triumphs.

Torino emerged from the rubble of post-World War Two Italy to win four consecutive league titles from 1946-1949.

In 1947-48 they scored a record 125 league goals, took the title by 16 points, won all but one of their 20 home matches and set a championship record by winning one game 10-0.

But their squad was wiped out in an air crash outside the city in May 1949 and they have never recovered.

They won one league title in 1976 but were relegated to the Second Division in 1996.

Torino came back up again a year ago but are 15th in the 18-team league, again staring relegation in the face.

Athens rejects earlier date for 2004 Olympics

Organisers of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games have rejected a proposal by International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch to advance the date of the summer games to accommodate professional soccer.

The IOC wanted the dates moved to allow some of the world's top players to appear for national teams in the Olympics by avoiding clashes with domestic and European league programmes.

But the 2004 committee decided at a board meeting not to agree to

Samaranch's request to hold the Games in July instead of the scheduled August 13-29 dates.

The committee believe it would be too difficult to secure hotel space in July and to increase seat capacity in Greece's soccer stadiums. Traffic in Athens is also far worse in July than August.

A spokeswoman for the organisers said that 2004 chairman Panayiotis Thomopoulos and managing director Costas Bakouris are due to inform at IOC headquarters in Lausanne of their decision.



Juan Antonio Samaranch

Bosnian Serb clubs wreck unification plans

The re-unification of Bosnia received a body blow last week when Bosnian Serb clubs said they would not compete in the newly re-structured Bosnia-Herzegovina Football Association (NSBIH).

As a consequence Bosnian Serb clubs have been barred from competing in the play-offs due to be held shortly to determine Bosnia's representatives in next season's UEFA Cup.

Two Bosnian clubs played in the preliminary rounds of the 1998/9 UEFA Cup — the only time since the start of the hostilities there in the early 1990s — and the play-off system was devised as a way of ending the impasse.

Bosnian Serb clubs also face being barred from the new multi-cultural league next season if Serb delegates fail to attend the NSBIH's founding session, said Munib Usanovic, the NSBIH's secretary-general.

The crisis developed last week when Bosnian Serb clubs claimed they had not been part of the consultation process to bring together the Moslem, Croatian and Bosnian Serb leagues in the end of season matches.

But all three Bosnian leagues were party to a statute, drafted by representatives of FIFA, UEFA, the IOC and Western peace officials in Bosnia last January.

Usanovic said he was appalled and disappointed by the action of the Bosnian Serb officials.

"They said they were not consulted during the drafting of the document and that it was against the provisions of the country's peace treaty," he said.

The NSBIH, which has covered mainly Moslem areas so far, is the only internationally recognised Bosnian soccer body.

Usanovic added that next month's playoffs would go

ahead with teams from majority Moslem and Croat areas.

FSRS representatives failed to show up at the first joint session of the NSBIH last week at which Moslem and Croat delegates adopted the document aiming to end the ethnic division of Bosnian soccer.

The FSRS — the Bosnian Serb Association — would

now be excluded from all soccer development projects sponsored by UEFA and FIFA, Usanovic said.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who is visiting the Balkan country this week for the April 25 charity game between Bosnia and FIFA's World Stars, would also not visit the Serb capital of Banja Luka, Usanovic said.

Ref attacks reporter

An incensed referee assaulted a journalist in the Angolan city of Lubango last week after being criticised for poor officiating, the state-run Angop news agency reported last week.

Referee Jose Mundila attacked radio reporter Pepe Antonio, of the state-owned Radio 5 station after he had aired criticism of Mundila's handling of matches at a pre-season tournament in the southern Huila province.

The reporter also hinted that Mundila had been taking bribes to influence the results of matches, Angop said. There was no evidence that this was the case.

The reporter was not seriously hurt in the attack after officials at the stadium quickly stepped in to stop the irate referee for raining more blows.

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until May 10)



1	Brazil	70	Latvia	138	Burundi
2	Czech Republic	71	Ecuador	139	Madagascar
3	France	72	Zimbabwe	140	Fiji
4	Spain	73	FYR Macedonia	141	Korea DPR
5	Germany	74	Guatemala	142	Tahiti
6	Argentina	75	Cuba	143	Benin
7	Norway	76	Bosnia-Herzegovina	144	Dominican Republic
8	Mexico	76	Estonia	145	Cayman Islands
8	Romania	76	Senegal	146	Andorra
10	Croatia	78	Gabon	146	Bermuda
11	Yugoslavia	78	Burkina Faso	148	Ethiopia
12	Denmark	80	Mali	149	Maldives
13	England	81	Albania	150	Solomon Islands
14	Italy	82	AUSTRALIA	150	Rwanda
15	Portugal	83	Namibia	152	Lesotho
16	Sweden	83	Algeria	153	Dominica
17	Colombia	85	Iraq	154	Surinam
18	United States	86	Northern Ireland	154	Yemen
18	Paraguay	87	Qatar	156	Antigua and Barbuda
20	Netherlands	88	Togo	157	San Marino
21	Scotland	89	Haiti	158	Gambia
22	Russia	90	Armenia	158	Sri Lanka
23	Chile	91	El Salvador	160	Laos
24	South Africa	92	Moldova	161	Botswana
25	Slovakia	93	Indonesia	162	Nepal
26	Morocco	94	Oman	163	Netherlands Antilles
27	Tunisia	95	Guinea	164	Kyrgyzstan
28	Israel	95	Wales	165	British Virgin Is.
29	Ukraine	96	Vietnam SR	166	Mauritania
30	Austria	98	Congo	167	Chinese Taipei
31	Turkey	100	Belarus	168	Niger
32	Greece	101	Azerbaijan	169	Chad
33	Belgium	102	New Zealand	170	Palestine
34	Poland	103	Jordan	171	Cambodia
35	Cameroon	104	Mozambique	171	Eritrea
36	Ireland Republic	105	Syria	173	Macao
37	Egypt	106	Kenya	174	Philippines
38	Zambia	106	Liberia	175	Guyana
39	Peru	108	Malaysia	176	Bahamas
40	Bulgaria	109	Barbados	177	Guinea-Bissau
40	Trinidad & Tobago	110	India	178	Aruba
42	Uruguay	111	Uganda	179	Central African Rep.
43	Korea Republic	112	Lebanon	180	Pakistan
44	Slovenia	113	Malawi	181	Tonga
44	Saudi Arabia	114	Venezuela	181	Cape Verde Islands
46	Iran	115	Faroe Islands	183	Samoa
47	Cote d'Ivoire	116	Malta	184	Cook Islands
48	Iceland	117	Panama	185	Papua New Guinea
49	Finland	118	Kazakhstan	185	Brunei Darussalam
50	Japan	119	Turkmenistan	187	Puerto Rico
50	Jamaica	120	Hong Kong	188	Vanuatu
52	Nigeria	121	Myanmar	189	Belize
53	Hungary	122	Mauritius	190	Nicaragua
54	Lithuania	123	Grenada	191	Sao Tome e Principe
54	Switzerland	125	Tajikistan	192	Equatorial Guinea
56	UAE	126	Bahrain	193	Seychelles
57	Ghana	127	St Lucia	194	US Virgin Islands
57	Uzbekistan	128	Tanzania	195	Anguilla
59	Cyprus	129	Sierra Leone	196	Mongolia
60	Thailand	130	Libya	197	Turks and Caicos Islands
60	Angola	131	Luxembourg	198	Djibouti
62	China PR	132	Liechtenstein	199	Somalia
63	Canada	133	Swaziland	200	Guam
64	Georgia	134	Bangladesh	201	Montserrat
65	Kuwait	135	St Vincent/Gr	202	American Samoa
66	Honduras	136	Sudan		
67	Congo DR	137			
67	Costa Rica				
69	Bolivia				

Note: Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.



Wembley Towers may move to Rugby League Museum

The twin towers of Wembley Stadium could find a new home near a proposed National Rugby League Museum on the River Mersey near Liverpool.

As well as being the spiritual home of English soccer, Wembley is also the host for rugby league's big day, the Challenge Cup final, when thousands of fans journey to London from the sport's heartland in the north.

And while soccer's authorities seem content to see the towers disappear, rugby league, which first held the Challenge Cup final at Wembley in 1929, may step in.

Halton Borough Council said it had been invited to enter into exclusive negotiations with the Rugby Football League over plans to house the five million pound (\$12.5 million) museum in Widnes, east of Liverpool.

"This does not guarantee that the museum will eventually be sited in

Halton, it does mean that it is the only applicant to have been asked to investigate its proposals further," said a council spokeswoman.

"The bid to host the rugby museum includes bringing the twin towers to Halton. But at this stage we are still in negotiations," she added.

A spokesman for Wembley confirmed the towers were available, but said he could not comment on their future.

Plans to tear down the towers as part of the construction of a new 90,000-seat stadium have angered soccer fans, who cherish a tradition of being photographed in front of them.

The reconstruction of Wembley, centrepiece of England's 2006 World Cup bid, faces delay because its owners and the local council cannot agree who should pay the 30 million pounds (\$75 million) for improved transport links.

The stadium's owners say they have no more money left in a 475 million pounds

(\$1.2 billion) budget for building costs.

A council meeting to approve the new stadium on April 25 has been postponed to allow for further discussions, a spokesman for London's Brent council said.

But the owners have hinted that if the council's decision goes against them, they will appeal to the government to overturn the decision, which could delay the redevelopment programme for at least a year.

Any delay in Brent's approval would be harmful to Britain's 2006 bid. FIFA, world soccer's governing body, decide on July 6 in Zurich which country should host the finals. England are bidding along with Brazil, Germany, Morocco and South Africa.

The last match due to be played at the present stadium, which was built in 1923 and seats 80,000 is next September's World Cup qualifier between England and Germany.

Ginola calls for foreigner limits

Tottenham Hotspur's French import David Ginola has said he believes the number of overseas players in European domestic leagues should be limited.

"I remember when you could only have three foreigners in a team, but now you can field all 11. You need a limit so as not to kill the chances of the youngsters," Ginola said.

"When I was nine years old I wanted to be a football player more than anything in the world. I'd hate to see nine-year-olds today think 'I can't do it, I can't be a footballer because I won't be able to play anyway'."

Ginola, 33, who was named Player of the Year last year and won the French equivalent of the award in 1994, said he believed the standard of English soccer had improved with the recent influx of foreign players.

"If you look at football in England in the last three years you see a change in the success in Europe — Manchester winning the Champions League, Chelsea in the Champions League, Arsenal and Leeds doing well. Look at the results and they have improved a lot.

"I am not saying that it is just because of foreigners in the Premier League but there was certainly a bigger gap between



David Ginola: Give youngsters a chance.

England and the other main European football countries five years ago. Italy, Spain and even Germany were being successful year after year, but not England."

Spanish Giant considering new superleague Project

The media arm of Spanish telecoms giant Telefonica may lead a European soccer superleague project which would replace the current Champions League format, a company source said last week.

Sixteen of Europe's biggest clubs, among them Manchester United, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, would be offered lucrative places in the proposed league which would be run on a closed basis without promotion or relegation.

The new league would feature 30 games a season for the clubs, meaning they would effectively have to field "B" teams in their national leagues.

The source said Telefonica Media had been approached by a Spanish sports promoter who was putting the project together with a view to creating a European soccer system similar to the U.S. NBA basketball association.

"Telefonica is interested in leading any project along these lines, be it this proposal or another one," the source said.

Telefonica has invested heavily in recent months to build up its media arm which it intends to list on the stock market.

Company executives have said they intend to use content from Telefonica Media for an expected boom in data transmission via new generation mobile telephones and other broadband platforms for carrying Internet-based services.

The source said the plan was still at an early stage but had been put to leading soccer clubs in Europe who were "very interested" in the idea. The group was also open to talks with other media players and with UEFA.

"We don't want to exclude anyone," the Telefonica Media source said.

The idea to make the competition exclusive to 16 invited teams would make it a non-starter as far as UEFA are concerned, however.

European football's governing body are, along with FIFA, committed to a system of qualification for all their competitions.

Last year a proposed superleague, put together by Media Partners, fell through as UEFA won backing for their revised

Champions League, which has succeeded in generating vastly increased revenue for successful clubs.

According to reports in Spanish newspapers, the teams invited to join the league would be Bayern Munich, Bayer Leverkusen, Borussia Dortmund, Liverpool, Manchester United, Arsenal, Porto, Ajax Amsterdam, Real Madrid, Barcelona, Juventus, Inter Milan, AC Milan and Paris St Germain, plus two from a reserve list.

Spanish newspaper El Pais said last week that member clubs would be rewarded with at least \$34 million a season for their involvement.



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UEFA CUP

Arsenal Fly English Flag as Turks Finally Reach Pinnacle

Galatasaray became the first Turkish side to reach a European soccer final when they drew 2-2 at Leeds United in a tense encounter at Elland Road last week to go through 4-2 on aggregate.

After the deaths of two Leeds fans during fighting before the first leg, the game attracted the heaviest police presence ever seen at an English match but, with no Turkish fans present, the night passed off with only minor scuffles between Leeds fans and police.



Harry Kewell: Sent off.

In the May 17 final in Copenhagen, Galatasaray will again face English opponents in the shape of Arsenal, who won 2-1 at Racing Lens for a 3-1 aggregate success.

Galatasaray had previously won away at Hertha Berlin, Borussia Dortmund and Real Mallorca and had lost only once since their 5-0 thrashing by Chelsea in the Champions League in

October.

With that impressive away record and with so much attention focused on off-field issues it was perhaps no surprise that Leeds, who had lost their last six games, were caught cold at Elland Road.

Poor defending allowed Hakan Sukur to run at goal after just five minutes and England defender Jonathan Woodgate brought him down in the box. Veteran Romanian midfielder Gheorghe Hagi confidently dispatched the resulting penalty to stun the crowd, from which visiting fans had been banned.

Norwegian Eirik Bakke headed an equaliser from a corner in the 16th minute and Ian Harte was denied a carbon copy goal soon after by a brilliant save by Brazilian World Cup keeper Claudio Taffarel.

But Leeds' slim hopes were sunk in the 42nd minute when Sukur waltzed past two tackles and, off-balance, was still able to shoot past Nigel Martyn.

A minute later Leeds had their inspirational midfielder Harry Kewell sent off, only for 31-year-old Slovakian referee Lubos Michel to even things up seconds later by showing a red card to Emre Belozoglu. Neither player appeared to make contact with an opponent.

The second half was far less fiery with Bakke's headed equaliser in the 68th minute a rare on-target effort.

Leeds' defeat, coming after the Champions League exit of Manchester United and Chelsea earlier in the week, left Arsenal flying the English Premier League flag.

They became the first English side to reach the UEFA Cup final since their north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur in 1984 and will have happy memories of the Parken Stadium final venue, having beaten Parma there to win the Cup Winners' Cup in 1994.

Leading 1-0 from the first leg,

Arsenal looked the more adventurous from the start at Lens and were deserved winners.

The vital away goal came in the 43rd minute when Silvinho and Frederik Ljungberg combined to set up Thierry Henry and the Frenchman turned well before firing high into the net for his 21st goal of the season. He has now scored in eight successive games.

Emmanuel Petit missed a great chance at the start of the second half and Henry hit the post soon after, then Lens' hopes were lifted after 73 minutes when Pascal Nouma headed in from close range to make it 1-1 on the night.

Nouma then missed a great chance before Marc Overmars laid a goal on a plate for Nwankwo Kanu four minutes from time to clinch Arsenal's victory.

SEMI-FINALS

In Leeds:

Leeds United 2 Galatasaray 2
Galatasaray won 4-2 on aggregate

Scorers:

Leeds United - Eirik Bakke 16, 68
Galatasaray - Gheorghe Hagi 5pen,
Hakan Sukur 42

Red cards:

Leeds United - Harry Kewell 42
Galatasaray - Emre Belozoglu 44
Halftime: 1-2; Attendance: 38,406

In Lens:

Racing Lens 1 Arsenal 2
Arsenal won 3-1 on aggregate

Scorers:

Racing Lens - Pascal Nouma 73
Arsenal - Thierry Henry 43,
Nwankwo Kanu 86

Halftime: 0-1; Attendance: 41,500

Arsenal play Galatasaray in the final in Copenhagen on Wednesday, May 17.

UNITED SIGN VAN NISTELROOY

Manchester United have signed PSV Eindhoven striker Ruud van Nistelrooy for an undisclosed sum, the Dutch club said last week.

"Negotiations between PSV Eindhoven and Manchester began and ended over the weekend," PSV Eindhoven spokesman Pedro Salazar said.

According to reports in Britain the transfer fee is a British record 18.5 million pounds (\$51 million).

Salazar would not confirm the amount but van Nistelrooy did not dispute the figure when questioned at a news conference last week.

"I hope I'm worth it," he said. "I will have to prove it."

Asked about the number of strikers on the books of the 1999 European champions, van Nistelrooy said every big club in the world had two or three good players in every position.

"To me it's an honour to play for

this club," he said. "I want to prove myself."

Van Nistelrooy, 23, top scorer in the Dutch league last year with 31

goals, has been out of action recently with a leg injury.

He said the injury had healed but he was still not match fit.



Ruud van Nistelrooy: Wants to prove his worth.

TV GUIDE

All times are Australian Eastern Standard Summer Time

TUESDAY APRIL 25

Brazilian Football
Flamengo v Vasco Da
Gama (LIVE)
Optus Vision (ESPN)
9am - 11am

English Premier League
Man. United v Chelsea
(Replay)
Fox Sports
1pm - 3pm

Fox Sports

5.30pm - 6.30pm

National Soccer League
Newcastle v South
Melbourne (LIVE)
Optus Vision
(C7 Sport 13)
7.30pm - 9.30pm

Soccer Scene
Fox Sports 2
1am - 2am

US Major League Soccer
Columbus Crew v Dallas
Burn
Optus Vision (ESPN)
3pm - 5pm

National Soccer League
ABC TV
5pm - 7pm

National Soccer League
Marconi v Adelaide
Force (LIVE)
Optus Vision
(C7 Sport 12)
6.30pm - 8.30pm

Dutch Football
Vitesse v Ajax
Optus Vision (ESPN)
12am - 2am
(Monday Morning)

English Premier League
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Fox Sports
12am - 3.30am
(Monday Morning)



Futbol Mundial
SBS TV
4pm - 4.30pm

UEFA Champions
League Weekly
Optus Vision (ESPN)
6pm - 8pm

National Soccer League
Brisbane v Northern
Spirit (LIVE)
Optus Vision
(C7 Sport 13)
7pm - 9pm

WEDNESDAY APRIL 26
Italian Serie A Magazine
Football Extra
Optus Vision (ESPN)
7.30pm - 8.30pm

English Premier League
Show
Fox Sports
8.30pm - 10pm

European Soccer Show
Optus Vision
(C7 Sport 12)
10pm - 11pm

International Friendly
Netherlands v Scotland
(LIVE)
Optus Vision (ESPN)
4.25am - 6.30am
(Thursday Morning)

THURSDAY APRIL 27
World Football
Optus Vision (ESPN)
8.30pm - 9.30pm

Soccer Central
Optus Vision
(C7 Sport 12)
9.30pm - 10.30pm

Spanish Primera Liga
Fox Sports
9.30pm - 11.30pm

FRIDAY APRIL 28
Soccer Scene

UEFA Champions
League
SBS TV
3.30pm - 4.30pm

World Soccer
SBS TV
4.30pm - 5.30pm

English Premier League
Preview
Fox Sports 2
5pm - 5.30pm

English Premier League
(Replay)
SBS TV
5.30pm - 6.30pm

English Premier League
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Fox Sports
11.55pm - 2am

SUNDAY APRIL 30
German Bundesliga
Optus Vision
(C7 Sport 13)
10am - 12pm

English Premier League
Replay overnight game
Fox Sports 2
10am - 12pm

Italian Serie A
SBS TV
10.30am - 11.30am

On the Ball
SBS TV
11.30am - 12.30pm



Italian Serie A
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Optus Vision (ESPN)
4.25am - 6.30am
(Monday Morning)

MONDAY MAY 1
Football Weekend
Optus Vision (ESPN)
3pm - 4pm

English Premier League
Highlights
Fox Sports
5.30pm - 6.30pm

English Premier League
Highlights
SBS TV
7.30pm - 8.30pm

Italian Serie A
Teams TBA
Optus Vision (ESPN)
12am - 2pm
(Tuesday Morning)

English Premier League
Teams TBA
Fox Sports
4am - 7.30am
(Tuesday Morning)

Times are subject to change.



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

MANCHESTER UNITED HAVE WON THIS YEARS LEAGUE TITLE

Newcastle United 2 Leeds United 2, Watford 2 Arsenal 3, Aston Villa 2 Leicester City 2, Chelsea 1 Middlesbrough 1, Sheffield Wednesday 0 Sunderland 2, Southampton 1 Manchester United 3, Tottenham Hotspur 2 Wimbledon 0, West Ham United 5 Coventry City 0, Bradford County 4 Derby County 4, Everton 0 Liverpool 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Manchester United	34	24	7	3	87	40	79
2. Liverpool	34	19	9	6	51	25	66
3. Arsenal	33	19	6	8	63	34	63
4. Leeds United	34	19	4	11	51	41	61
5. Chelsea	34	16	11	7	44	29	59
6. Aston Villa	35	15	11	9	43	31	56
7. Sunderland	34	15	9	10	54	51	54
8. West Ham United	34	15	9	10	51	49	54
9. Everton	35	12	13	10	58	45	49
10. Tottenham Hotspur	35	14	7	14	52	44	49
11. Leicester City	34	13	7	14	48	50	46
12. Newcastle United	34	12	8	14	55	50	44
13. Middlesbrough	34	12	8	14	40	49	44
14. Coventry City	35	11	8	16	43	50	41
15. Southampton	34	11	7	16	42	58	40
16. Derby County	34	8	9	17	41	52	33
17. Wimbledon	35	7	11	17	44	67	32
18. Sheffield Wed	34	7	6	21	30	60	27
19. Bradford City	34	6	9	19	33	65	27
20. Watford	34	5	5	24	30	70	20

LEADING SCORERS

29 - Kevin Phillips (Sunderland)
21 - Alan Shearer (Newcastle United)
19 - Andy Cole (Manchester United)
17 - Dwight Yorke (Manchester United),
16 - Michael Bridges (Leeds United)
15 - Paolo Di Canio (West Ham United)
14 - Steffen Iversen (Tottenham Hotspur), Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
13 - Niall Quinn (Sunderland), Chris Armstrong (Tottenham Hotspur)
12 - Kevin Campbell (Everton), Robbie Keane (Coventry City), Chris Armstrong (Tottenham), Paulo Wanchope (West Ham United), Hamilton Ricard (Middlesbrough), Marians Pahars (Southampton)
11 - Michael Owen (Liverpool), Dion Dublin (Aston Villa), Nwankwo Kanu (Arsenal)
10 - Tony Cottee (Leicester City), Emile Heskey (Liverpool, 7 for Leicester City), Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (Manchester United)
9 - Tore Andre Flo (Chelsea), Carl Cort (Wimbledon), Titi Camara (Liverpool), Harry Kewell (Leeds United), Patrik Berger (Liverpool), Paul Scholes (Manchester United), Gary McAllister (Coventry City), Dean Windass (Bradford City).

ENGLISH FIRST DIVISION

Crewe 3 Stockport 2, Crystal Palace 0 Birmingham 2, Grimsby 0 Blackburn 0, Huddersfield 0 Bolton 3, Man City 2 Tranmere 0, Norwich 0 Port Vale 0, Nottm Forest 0 Sheff Utd 0, QPR 3 Ipswich 1, Swindon 1 Fulham 0, Walsall 2 West Brom 1, Wolverhampton 2 Barnsley 0, Charlton 1 Portsmouth 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Charlton	43	27	9	7	77	39	90
2 Man City	43	24	10	9	71	37	82
3 Ipswich	43	22	12	9	65	41	78
4 Barnsley	43	22	10	11	84	63	76
5 Birmingham	43	21	10	12	63	43	73
6 Huddersfield	43	20	11	12	60	43	71
7 Wolverhampton	43	19	11	13	59	46	68
8 Bolton	43	18	13	12	63	48	67
9 Fulham	43	16	15	12	45	37	63
10 Blackburn	43	15	16	12	52	44	61
11 QPR	43	15	16	12	58	51	61
12 Norwich	43	13	15	15	42	46	54
13 Tranmere	43	14	11	18	53	64	53
14 Sheff Utd	43	13	13	17	55	66	52
15 Portsmouth	43	13	11	19	52	60	50
16 Grimsby	43	13	11	19	39	63	50
17 Nottm Forest	43	12	13	18	47	52	49

18 Crystal Palace	43	11	15	17	53	64	48
19 Stockport	43	11	15	17	48	64	48
20 Crewe	43	13	8	22	42	63	47
21 Walsall	43	10	13	20	51	73	43
22 West Brom	43	8	18	17	39	59	42
23 Port Vale	43	7	15	21	47	64	36
24 Swindon	43	8	11	24	35	70	35

ENGLISH SECOND DIVISION

Bristol Rovers 2 Bristol City 0, Burnley 4 Millwall 3, Bury 3 Blackpool 2, Chesterfield 0 Wrexham 3, Colchester 3 Cambridge 1, Gillingham 2 Luton 0, Oldham 1 Cardiff 2, Oxford 1 Brentford 1, Preston 1 Scunthorpe 0, Stoke 1 Bournemouth 0, Wigan 1 Reading 0, Wycombe 2 Notts County 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Preston	43	26	11	6	69	33	89
2 Wigan	43	22	15	6	69	34	81
3 Bristol Rovers	43	23	10	10	66	40	79
4 Burnley	43	22	13	8	62	44	79
5 Gillingham	42	23	9	10	71	44	78
6 Millwall	43	22	12	9	71	45	78
7 Stoke	42	20	13	9	61	40	73
8 Notts County	43	18	10	15	58	50	64
9 Bristol City	43	14	18	11	53	50	60
10 Wycombe	43	15	13	15	53	49	58
11 Luton	43	16	8	19	58	63	56
12 Oldham	43	15	10	18	47	53	55
13 Reading	43	14	13	16	53	61	55
14 Bournemouth	43	16	6	21	54	57	54
15 Wrexham	43	14	11	18	49	61	53
16 Bury	42	12	16	14	56	58	52
17 Brentford	43	13	12	18	45	56	51
18 Colchester	43	14	9	20	56	77	51
19 Cambridge	43	11	12	20	61	61	45
20 Cardiff	42	8	17	17	42	59	41
21 Oxford	43	11	8	24	39	70	41
22 Scunthorpe	43	9	12	22	39	68	39
23 Blackpool	43	7	15	21	44	73	36
24 Chesterfield	43	6	13	24	29	59	31

ENGLISH THIRD DIVISION

Barnet 1 Rotherham 0, Carlisle 0 Exeter 0, Cheltenham 0 Darlington 0, Hartlepool 1 Mansfield 0, Lincoln 0 Leyton Orient 0, Macclesfield 1 Chester 1, Peterborough 2 Halifax 1, Plymouth 1 Rochdale 1, Shrewsbury 2 Southend 1, Swansea 2 Torquay 1, York 0 Brighton 0, Northampton 1 Hull City 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Swansea	43	22	12	9	46	29	78
2 Rotherham	43	22	11	10	67	34	77
3 Darlington	43	20	14	9	62	34	74
4 Peterborough	43	21	11	11	62	52	74
5 Northampton	43	22	7	14	57	44	73
6 Barnet	43	20	10	13	53	49	70
7 Hartlepool	43	20	8	15	55	46	68
8 Cheltenham	43	19	10	14	48	38	67
9 Plymouth	43	16	17	10	53	45	65
10 Rochdale	43	17	13	13	54	49	64
11 Macclesfield	43	17	11	15	62	56	62
12 Brighton	43	15	15	13	61	45	60
13 Torquay	42	16	12	14	54	48	60
14 Hull City	43	14	14	15	41	37	56
15 Lincoln	43	14	14	15	66	64	56
16 Mansfield	43	16	7	20	48	61	55
17 Halifax	43	14	9	20	42	54	51
18 Southend	42	13	11	18	49	57	50
19 York	43	11	15	17	37	51	48
20 Leyton Orient	43	12	11	20	42	50	47
21 Exeter	43	10	11	22	42	67	41
22 Carlisle	43	9	11	23	41	71	38
23 Shrewsbury	43	8	13	22	36	62	37
24 Chester	43	9	9	25	42	77	36

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

RANGERS HAVE WON THIS YEARS LEAGUE TITLE

St Johnstone 0 Rangers 2, Aberdeen 2 Motherwell 1, Celtic 1 Hibernian 1, Dundee 1 Kilmarnock 2, Hearts 1 Dundee United 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Rangers	31	24	6	1	85	22	78
2. Celtic	31	18	4	9	81	36	58
3. Hearts	32	13	8	11	44	38	47
4. Motherwell	32	11	9	12	42	61	42
5. Dundee United	31	11	6	14	33	48	39
6. Hibernian	31	9	11	11	45	51	38
7. Dundee	32	10	5	17	41	59	35
8. Kilmarnock	32	7	13	12	34	42	34
9. St Johnstone	31	8	10	13	31	41	34
10. Aberdeen	31	7	6	18	35	74	27

LEADING SCORERS

25 - Mark Viduka (Celtic)
16 - Rod Wallace (Rangers), Billy Dodds (Rangers, 9 for Dundee United)
14 - Jorg Albertz (Rangers)
12 - Gary McSwegan (Hearts)
11 - Willie Falconer (Dundee)
10 - John Spencer (Motherwell), Nathan Lowndes (St Johnstone),
9 - Michael Mols (Rangers), Kenny Miller (Hibernian), Eyal Berkovic (Celtic), Russell Latapy (Hibernian), Lee McCulloch (Motherwell)
8 - Colin Cameron (Hearts), Arild Stavrum (Aberdeen), Mark Burchill (Celtic), Mixu Paatelainen (Hibernian)
7 - Henrik Larsson (Celtic), Christophe Cocard (Kilmarnock)
6 - Jonatan Johansson (Rangers), Lubomir Moravcik (Celtic), Joaquim Ferraz (Dundee United), Thomas Johnson (Celtic), Darren Jackson (Hearts), Dirk Lehmann (Hibernian), David Hannah (Dundee United)

SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION

Airdrie 0 Clydebank 0, Ayr 1 St Mirren 2, Inverness CT 1 Dunfermline 2, G Morton 0 Falkirk 2, Raith 1 Livingston 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 St Mirren	34	22	7	5	72	34	73
2 Dunfermline	34	19	11	4	65	31	68
3 Falkirk	34	20	6	8	62	35	66
4 Raith	34	17	7	10	55	37	58
5 Livingston	34	17	7	10	55	44	58
6 Inverness CT	34	12	9	13	53	53	45
7 Ayr	34	10	7	17	38	46	37
8 G Morton	34	8	6	20	40	61	30
9 Airdrie	34	7	8	19	29	66	29
10 Clydebank	34	1	6	27	17	79	9

SCOTTISH SECOND DIVISION

Alloa 2 Clyde 1, Arbroath 1 Queen of South 2, Hamilton 0 Ross County 3, Stenhousemuir 2 Partick 0, Stranraer 3 Stirling 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Clyde	34	17	11	6	60	34	62
2 Ross County	34	17	7	10	52	36	58
3 Alloa	34	15	13	6	51	37	58
4 Partick	34	12	10	12	40	40	46
5 Arbroath	34	10	14	10	48	49	44
6 Stranraer	34	8	18	8	44	42	42
7 Stirling	34	10	7	17	59	71	37
8 Stenhousemuir	34	10	7	17	42	56	37
9 Queen of South	34	8	8	18	43	68	32
10 Hamilton	34	9	13	12	37	43	25

SCOTTISH THIRD DIVISION

Berwick 0 East Fife 1, Brechin 1 Forfar 0, Cowdenbeath 2 Montrose 1, Dumbarton 0 Albion 0, East Stirling 0 Queens Park 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Queens Park	34	18	9	7	50	35	63
2 Berwick	34	18	8	8	51	29	62
3 Forfar	34	16	9	9	61	38	57
4 East Fife	34	16	8	10	41	36	56
5 Cowdenbeath	34	15	8	11	55	38	53
6 Dumbarton	34	14	8	12	50	48	50
7 East Stirling	34	11	7	16	27	46	40
8 Brechin	34	9	8	17	39	48	35
9 Montrose	34	9	7	18	36	51	34
10 Albion	34	5	6	23	31	72	21

ITALIAN SERIE A

Bologna 2 Perugia 1, Inter Milan 3 Bari 0, Juventus 1 Fiorentina 0, Lecce 2 Cagliari 1, Piacenza 0 Lazio 2, Reggina 1 AC Milan 2, AS Roma 0 Parma 0, Udinese 0 Torino 0, Venezia 2 Verona 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Juventus	31	20	8	3	45	17	68
2. Lazio	31	18	9	4	55	29	63
3. AC Milan	31	14	12	5	59	39	54
4. Parma	31	15	9	7	48	35	54
5. Inter Milan	31	15	7	9	54	31	52
6. AS Roma	31	14	9	8	54	31	51
7. Udinese	31	12	10	9	53	40	46
8. Fiorentina	31	10	12	9	38	38	42
9. Reggina	31	9	12	10	29	36	39
10. Perugia	31	11	6	14	33	48	39
11. Bologna	31	9	11	11	27	33	38
12. Verona	31	9	11	11	35	42	38
13. Lecce	31	9	10	12	30	41	37
14. Bari	31	9	7	15	32	47	34
15. Torino	31	6	12	13	30	43	30
16. Venezia	31	6	8	17	28	53	26
17. Cagliari	31	3	11	17	26	49	20
18. Piacenza	31	4	8	19	17	41	20

LEADING SCORERS

22 - Andriy Shevchenko (AC Milan)
21 - Hernan Crespo (Parma)
18 - Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina)
17 - Vincenzo Montella (AS Roma)
15 - Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus)
14 - Cristiano Lucarelli (Lecce), Marco Ferrante (Torino)
13 - Christian Vieri (Inter Milan)
12 - Roberto Muzzi (Udinese)
11 - Giuseppe Signori (Bologna), Marcelo Salas (Lazio), Oliver Bierhoff (Milan), Marco Delvecchio (Roma)
10 - Mohamed Kallon (Reggina)
9 - Alvaro Recoba (Inter), Nicola Amoruso (Perugia), Stefano Fiore (Udinese), Filippo Maniero (Venezia)
8 - Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus), Francesco Totti (Roma)<



SPANISH PRIMERA LIGA

LEADING SCORERS

25 - Salva Ballesta (Racing Santander)
23 - Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Atletico Madrid),
Catanha (Malaga)
20 - Roy Makaay (Deportivo Coruna)
19 - Savo Milosevic (Real Zaragoza)
16 - Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid)
15 - Diego Tristan (Real Mallorca)
13 - Patrick Kluivert (Barcelona)
12 - Rivaldo (Barcelona), Fernando Morientes (Real Madrid), Juan Carlos Gomez (Sevilla), Victor Fernandez (Valladolid)
11 - Gaizka Mendieta (Valencia), Dely Valdes (Oviedo)
10 - Dani Garcia (Barcelona), Joseba Etxeberria (Athletic Bilbao), Alfonso Perez (Real Betis), Raul Tamudo (Espanyol)
9 - Vassilis Tsartas (Sevilla), Djalmirha (Deportivo Coruna), Luis Figo (Barcelona), Manuel Canabal (Rayo Vallecano), Oscar de Paula (Real Sociedad), Yordi Gonzalez (Real Zaragoza), Claudio Lopez (Valencia)
8 - Ruben Navarro (Numancia), Pauleta Resendes (Deportivo Coruna), Juanele Castano (Real Zaragoza), Rodrigo (Valladolid)

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Arminia Bielefeld 1 SpVgg Unterhaching 0, Borussia Dortmund 0 Bayern Munich 1, VfL Wolfsburg 3 Kaiserslautern 2, SSV Ulm 0 Hertha Berlin 1, SC Freiburg 2 Schalke 04 1, TSV 1860 Munich 1 VfB Stuttgart 1, Hansa Rostock 3 MSV Duisburg 1, Werder Bremen 1 Bayer Leverkusen 3, Eintracht Frankfurt 3 Hamburg SV 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Bayer Leverkusen	31	19	10	2	68	33	67
2. Bayern Munich	31	19	7	5	63	26	64
3. Hamburg SV	31	15	10	6	60	36	55
4. Hertha Berlin	31	13	10	8	38	41	49
5. TSV 1860 Munich	31	13	9	9	50	44	48
6. VfL Wolfsburg	31	11	13	7	49	51	46
7. Kaiserslautern	31	14	4	13	46	54	46
8. Werder Bremen	31	12	8	11	60	48	44
9. VfB Stuttgart	31	13	5	13	36	41	44
10. SpVgg U'haching	31	10	8	13	37	39	38
11. Schalke 04	31	8	13	10	39	39	37
12. SC Freiburg	31	9	9	13	42	47	36
13. Hansa Rostock	31	7	14	10	40	52	35
14. Borussia Dortmund	31	7	12	12	35	36	33
15. Eintracht Frankfurt	31	10	5	16	35	39	33
16. SSV Ulm	31	8	8	15	31	54	32
17. Arminia Bielefeld	31	6	8	17	34	55	26
18. MSV Duisburg	31	4	9	18	36	63	21

Note: Eintracht Frankfurt deducted two points for financial irregularities by German Soccer Federation.

LEADING SCORERS

16 - Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen), Martin Max (TSV 1860 Munich)
13 - Ebbe Sand (Schalke 04)
12 - Ailton (Werder Bremen), Jonathan Akpoborie (VfL Wolfsburg), Michael Preetz (Hertha Berlin)
11 - Marco Bode (Werder Bremen), Youri Djorkaeff (Kaiserslautern), Elber (Bayern Munich)
10 - Stefan Beinlich (Bayer Leverkusen), Andrzej Juskowiak (VfL Wolfsburg), Adel Sellimi (SC Freiburg), Paulo Sergio (Bayern Munich)

DUTCH FIRST DIVISION

PSV EINDHOVEN HAVE WON THIS YEARS LEAGUE TITLE

Feyenoord 1 Ajax Amsterdam 1, RKC Waalwijk 1 Den Bosch 1, NEC Nijmegen 1 Vitesse Arnhem 0, Willem II Tilburg 5 Graafschap Doetinchem 3, Heerenveen 5 Roda JC Kerkrade 1, Sparta Rotterdam 1 Cambuur Leeuwarden 2, Twente Enschede 1 PSV Eindhoven 3, AZ Alkmaar 2 MVV Maastricht 0, Fortuna Sittard 3 Utrecht 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. PSV Eindhoven	31	24	3	4	94	23	75
2. Heerenveen	31	20	3	8	61	34	63
3. Ajax Amsterdam	31	17	7	7	70	45	58
4. Feyenoord	31	16	9	6	58	48	57
5. Vitesse Arnhem	31	16	8	7	61	41	56
6. Twente Enschede	31	15	11	5	50	33	56
7. AZ Alkmaar	31	17	4	10	64	50	55

8. Roda JC Kerkrade	31	13	7	11	54	49	46
9. Willem II Tilburg	31	13	7	11	52	59	46
10. Utrecht	31	13	3	15	51	57	42
11. RKC Waalwijk	31	11	6	14	40	58	39
12. Fortuna Sittard	31	9	7	15	42	50	34
13. Sparta Rotterdam	31	10	4	17	45	64	34
14. Graafschap	31	8	8	15	38	52	32
15. NEC Nijmegen	31	7	6	18	35	56	27
16. MVV Maastricht	31	5	6	20	35	66	21
17. Cambuur	31	4	7	20	29	62	19
18. Den Bosch	31	3	10	18	28	71	19

LEADING SCORERS

29 - Ruud van Nistelrooy (PSV Eindhoven)
22 - Pierre van Hooijdonk (Vitesse Arnhem)
19 - Arnold Bruggink (PSV)
18 - Anthony Lurling (Heerenveen)
17 - Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink (Twente Enschede)
John Bosman (AZ Alkmaar)
16 - Luc Nilis (PSV)
15 - Bob Peeters (Roda JC Kerkrade)
14 - Nikos Machlas (Ajax Amsterdam)
13 - Richard Knopper (Ajax)

BELGIAN FIRST DIVISION

Beveren 3 Sint-Truiden 4, Excelsior Mouscron 0 Lokeren 0, Standard Liege 3 Eendracht Aalst 1, Westerlo 8 Mechelen 0, Lommel 1 Verbroederen Geel 1, Ghent 4 Harelbeke 2, Genk 1 Anderlecht 4, Charleroi 3 Germinal Beerschot 0, Lierse 1 Club Bruges 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Anderlecht	32	21	8	3	83	35	71
2. Club Bruges	32	19	4	9	65	31	61
3. Ghent	32	19	3	10	74	49	60
4. Standard Liege	32	18	2	12	65	52	56
5. Excelsior Mouscron	32	15	8	9	65	44	53
6. Lierse	32	15	7	10	63	43	52
7. Germinal Beerschot	32	15	7	10	52	43	52
8. Westerlo	32	14	8	10	66	63	50
9. Genk	32	14	6	12	58	57	48
10. Mechelen	32	12	5	15	46	72	41
11. Lokeren	32	10	11	11	49	55	41
12. Eendracht Aalst	32	11	3	18	52	68	36
13. Beveren	32	9	8	15	48	60	35
14. Sint-Truiden	32	9	7	16	38	60	34
15. Harelbeke	32	9	5	18	52	69	32
16. Verbroederen Geel	32	5	13	14	31	54	28
17. Charleroi	32	6	9	17	38	61	27
18. Lommel	32	4	12	16	30	62	24

NOTE: Belgian FA changed result of Harelbeke v Beveren match on January 23, wch Harelbeke had won 6-3, to a 5-0 win for Beveren as Harelbeke fielded an ineligible player.

LEADING SCORERS

30 - Ole-Martin Aarst (Ghent)
28 - Toni Brogno (Westerlo)
20 - Jan Koller (Anderlecht)
17 - David Paas (Harelbeke)
15 - Eric Van Meir (Lierse) Marcin Zewlakow (Excelsior Mouscron).

PORTUGUESE PRMIER LEAGUE

Belenenses 2 Salgueiros 1, Campomaiorense 1 Santa Clara 0, Braga 1 Farense 0, Alverca 0 Estrela Amadora 1, Porto 4 Vitoria Setubal 1, Boavista 2 Gil Vicente 0, Rio Ave 1 Sporting Lisbon 2, Uniao Leiria 2 Benfica 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Sporting Lisbon	31	21	8	2	51	21	71
2. Porto	31	21	6	4	60	20	69
3. Benfica	31	18	6	7	52	32	60
4. Boavista	31	15	6	10	36	28	51
5. Gil Vicente	31	13	9	9	44	31	48
6. Vitoria Guimaraes	30	14	5	11	43	32	47
7. Maritimo	30	11	11	8	33	29	44
8. Estrela Amadora	31	9	14	8	33	30	41
9. Belenenses	31	9	13	9	35	34	40
10. Braga	31	12	4	15	39	40	40
11. Uniao Leiria	31	9	11	11	28	30	38
12. Alverca	31	10	7	14	36	44	37
13. Farense	31	7	10	14	30	55	31
14. Rio Ave	31	7	9	15	30	47	30
15. Campomaiorense	31	8	6	17	28	47	30

16. Salgueiros	31	8	6	17	24	42	30
17. Vitoria Setubal	31	8	5	18	23	47	29
18. Santa Clara	31	5	10	16	29	45	25

YUGOSLAV FIRST DIVISION

Obilic Belgrade 1 Sartid Smederevo 0, Hajduk Kula 2 Milicionar Belgrade 0, Proleter Zrenjanin 0 Red Star Belgrade 1, Hajduk Belgrade 2 Zeleznik Belgrade 1, Cukaricki Belgrade 1 Zemun Belgrade 2, Sutjeska Niksic 1 Rad Belgrade 0, Radnicki Nis 4 OFK Beograd Belgrade 0, Spartak Subotica 2 Radnicki Kragujevac 1, Vojvodina Novi Sad 4 Borac Cacak 0, Partizan Belgrade 4 Buducnost Podgorica 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Red Star Belgrade	34	27	6	1	70	17	87
2. Partizan Belgrade	34	27	4	3	95	26	85
3. Obilic Belgrade	34	25	5	4	59	26	80
4. Rad Belgrade	34	15	8	11	50	38	53
5. Sutjeska Niksic	35	14	9	12	42	43	51
6. Radnicki Nis	35	15	4	16	46	41	49
7. OFK Belgrade	34	12	10	12	48	50	46
8. Zeleznik Belgrade	34	12	9	13	44	41	45
9. Buducnost	34	13	6	15	40	38	45
10. Cukaricki Belgrade	34	12	9	13	33	37	45
11. Zemun Belgrade	34	12	9	13	40	47	45
12. Vojvodina Novi	34	12	8	14	47	43	44
13. Milicionr Belgrade	35	12	8	17	43	46	44
14. Radnicki	34	10	11	13	27	36	41
15. Sartid Smederevo	35	11	7	17	33	41	40
16. Hajduk Kula	34	11	7	16	28	38	40
17. Proleter Zrenjanin	34	10	9	15	31	40	39
18. Hajduk Belgrade	34	12	3	19	47	64	39
19. Mogren Budva	34	11	5	18	34	58	38
20. Spartak Subotica	35	8	5	22	28	67	29
21. Borac Cacak	35	6	4	25	35	83	22

CROATIAN FIRST DIVISION

Hajduk Split 5 NK Zagreb 0, Dinamo Zagreb 3 Cibalia 0, Hrv. Dragovoljac 2 Istra Pula 0, Slaven Belupo 2 Sibenik 1, Varteks Varazdin 3 Vukovar '91 2, Osijek 2 NK Rijeka 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Dinamo Zagreb	29	19	6	4	72	22	63
2. Hajduk Split	29	16	9	4	56	25	56
3. Osijek	29	15	7	7	52	39	52
4. Slaven Belupo	29	10	12	7	26	29	42
5. NK Rijeka	29	11	7	11	48	36	40
6. Cibalia Vinkovci	29	9	11	9	35	35	38
7. NK Zagreb	29	9	10	10	39	43	37
8. Varteks Varazdin	29	10	7	12	30	41	37
9. Hrv. Dragovoljac	29	7	8	14	33	53	29
10. Sibenik	29	6	9	14	26	47	27
11. Vukovar '91	29	6	8	15	24	45	26
12. Istra Pula	29	6	6	17	27	53	24

NOTE: Hajduk deducted one point for fielding a suspended player against Hrvatski Dragovoljac in March.

ROMANIAN FIRST DIVISION

Rapid Bucharest 3 National Bucharest 2, Dinamo Bucharest 3 Steaua Bucharest 2, FCM Brasov 5 Onesti 1, Rocar Bucharest 2 Farul Constanta 0, Extensiv Craiova 2 Universitatea Craiova 3, Petrolul Ploiesti 4 CSM Resita 2, Arges Pitesti 1 Ceahlautul Piatra Neamt 1, Gloria Bistita 2 Astra Ploiesti 0, Otelul Galati 3 FCM Bacau 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Dinamo Bucharest	30	24	3	3	79	32	75
2. Rapid Bucharest	30	19	5	6	56	35	62
3. Ceahlautul Piatra	30	15	6	9	46	39	51
4. Arges Pitesti	30	14	6	10	39	30	48
5. Steaua Bucharest	30	15	3	12	52	50	48
6. Gloria Bistrita	30	15	2	13	44	40	47
7. Otelul Galati	30	14	4	12	48	41	46
8. National Bucharest	30	13	4	13	53	40	43
9. Astra Ploiesti	30	12	7	11	39	36	43
10. FCM Bacau	30	12	6	12	32	34	42
11. Petrolul Ploiesti	30	12	5	13	45	47	41
12. Rocar Bucharest	30	13	1	16	45	47	40
13. Brasov	30	12	3	15	47	42	39
14. Universitatea	30	11	6	13	36	35	39
15. Farul Constanta	30	11	6	13	35	43	39

16. Onesti	30	8	3	19	32	76	27
17. CSM Resita	30	5	8	17	34	62	23
18. Extensiv Craiova	30	4	4	22	24	57	16

GREEK FIRST DIVISION

Ionikos 0 Paniliakos 2, Kalamata 0 Olympiakos 1, OFI 4 Ethnikos Astir 1, AEK Athens 3 Proodeftiki 2, PAOK 1 Panachaiki 1, Trikala 2 Panionios 3, Kavala 1 Apollon 3, Aris 2 Iraklis 1, Panathinaikos 2 Xanthi 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Olympiakos	29	25	2	2	73	17	77
2. Panathinaikos	29	24	4	1	75	21	76
3. OFI	29	15	9	5	49	36	54
4. AEK	29	15	6	8	53	37	51
5. Panionios	29	14	2	13	45	48	44
6. Aris	29	12	7	10	40	34	43
7. Iraklis	29	13	4	12	50	47	43
8. PAOK	29	11	10	8	48	36	43
9. Xanthi	29	10	8	11	32	37	38
10. Ionikos	29	9	10	10	36	48	37
11. Paniliakos	29	10	4	15	33	38	34
12. Panachaiki	29	7	11	11	36	25	32
13. Kalamata	29	8	8	13	29	47	32
14. Ethnikos Astir	29	9	4	16	25	43	31
15. Kavala	29	8	6	15	31	44	30
16. Proodeftiki	29	5	7	17	23	44	22
17. Apollon	29	5	6	18	23	43	21
18. Trikala	29	4	6	19	27	59	18

HUNGARIAN FIRST DIVISION

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	Total							Home							Away						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	31	16	9	6	69	40	57	16	10	2	4	33	21		15	6	7	2	36	19	
PERTH GLORY	31	16	7	8	57	42	55	15	10	3	2	34	18		16	6	4	6	23	24	
MARCONI STALLIONS	31	16	6	9	50	41	54	16	10	2	4	28	20		15	6	4	5	22	21	
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	31	15	7	9	53	37	52	15	8	5	2	33	16		16	7	2	7	20	21	
NEWCASTLE BREAKERS	30	14	9	7	43	36	51	15	8	5	2	27	18		15	6	4	5	16	18	
CARLTON SC	31	14	7	10	49	38	49	15	7	4	4	25	18		16	7	3	6	24	20	
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	31	13	8	10	47	33	47	16	9	4	3	33	17		15	4	4	7	14	16	
AUCKLAND KINGZ	31	13	5	13	52	55	44	16	8	3	5	30	24		15	5	2	8	22	31	
BRISBANE STRIKERS	31	11	10	10	41	37	43	15	6	6	3	27	17		16	5	4	7	14	20	
SOUTH MELBOURNE	31	12	7	12	49	48	43	16	8	4	4	26	15		15	4	3	8	22	32	
PARRAMATTA POWER	30	12	5	13	48	43	41	15	8	4	3	28	15		15	4	1	10	20	28	
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	31	11	6	14	36	53	39	15	7	2	6	18	18		16	4	4	8	18	35	
NORTHERN SPIRIT	31	11	3	17	41	54	36	16	8	2	6	22	21		15	3	1	11	19	33	
GIPPSLAND FALCONS	31	7	8	16	21	42	29	16	4	4	8	13	19		15	3	4	8	8	23	
CANBERRA COSMOS	31	7	8	16	39	62	29	15	4	3	8	17	25		16	3	5	8	22	37	
SYDNEY UNITED	31	4	5	22	17	51	17	16	4	3	9	14	22		15	0	2	13	3	29	

DEFERRED MATCH

AUCKLAND KINGZ 4
(Silva 28, 34 & 61, Suri 93)

PARRAMATTA POWER 0

Venue: North Harbour Stadium. Crowd: 4,500. Referee: J Blaney.

Cautions: Plesa (PP) 34, Burns (PP) 58

Teams: **Auckland Kingz:** Duke, Van Steeden (Osman 64), Perry, Rufer (Suri 45), Jackson, Campbell, Ngata (Stergipoulos 64), Vicelich, Jones, Silva, Hickey.

Paramatta Power: Crews, Eagleton, Plesa, Vrkic, Burns, Ardone, Berry, Angelucci (Sterjovski 60), Byrnes (Griffiths 64), Elrich, Bennett (Laybutt 65).

Round 31: Auckland 0 vs Adelaide City 2 (Lineups not available)

MARCONI STALLIONS 3
(Gibson 50, Renaud 58, S. Babic 73)

PERTH GLORY 2
(Trajkovski 9 pen, Milicevic 12)

Venue: Marconi Stadium. Crowd: 5,721. Referee: M. Breeze.

Cautions: Milicevic (PG) 30, Trajkovski (PG) 64.

Teams: **Marconi Stallions:** Turnbull, Invincible, M. Babic, Kim, Longo, Renaud, Care (Di Gia 46), Gibson, Zoric, Awaritefe (Farah 83), S. Babic, (Trajanovski 79)

Perth Glory: J. Petkovic: Trajkovski (Afkos 70), Valle (Carbone 80), Milicevic, G. Naven, Miller, Werhman, Edwards, Junior: Despotovski (Ergic 74), Schwertz.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

P Cardozo	(Sydney Olympic)	18
M Curcija	(South Melbourne)	18
D Mori	(Adelaide City Force)	18
J Buonavoglia	(Newcastle Breakers)	16
S Young	(Wollongong Wolves)	16
Z Babic	(Marconi Stallions)	14
S Petrovski	(Wollongong Wolves)	14
A Edwards	(Perth Glory)	13
A Moreira	(Carlton SC)	13
C Boutsianis	(Perth Glory)	13

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
(Kupresak 54 og)

SYDNEY UNITED 0

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. Crowd: 4,126. Referee: P Mur.

Cautions: Maric (SU) 56, Palapanis (SU) 89, Bosnar (SU) 94.

Teams: **South Melbourne:** Jones, Iosifidis, DeAmicis, Orlic, Panopoulos, Curcija, Anastasiadis (Coveny 68), Magnacca (Culibrk 86), Lozanovski, Tsekiris (Trimboli 78), Liparoti.

Sydney United: Hughes, Rastall (Deur 68), Maric, Kupresak, Palapanis, Arrarte, Moric, Genc (Usljebrka 87), Pondeljak, Bosnar, Bosevski (Pellegriano 74).

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2
(Mendez 55, Cardozo 86)

PARRAMATTA POWER 1
(Sterjovski 23)

Venue: Belmore Sports Ground. Crowd: 3,841. Referee: G Connolly.

Cautions: Ardone (PP) 15, Sinozic (SO) 31, Burns (PP) 35, Kohler (SO) 67, Mendez (SO) 87.

Teams: **Sydney Olympic:** Perosh, Thomas, Tsekenis, Arambasic (Mendez 45), Cardozo, Emerton, Sinozic, Wilson, Goutzioulis, Kohler, Marusic (Zorbas 73).

Parramatta Power: Crews, Barrett, Eagleton, Ardone (Gibson 70), Sterjovski (Taliadoros 80), Griffiths, Berry (Bennett 57), Laybutt, Byrnes, Elrich, Burns.

ABSW PLAYER OF THE YEAR

TURN TO PAGE 13

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
(R. Griffiths 56)

CANBERRA COSMOS 2
(Clark 37 & 58)

Venue: North Power Stadium. Crowd: 10,214. Referee: M. Shield.

Cautions: Slater (NS) 51, Langdon (NS) 59, James (CC) 90.

Teams: **Northern Spirit:** Van Stratten, Bingley, Langdon, Rudan, Cunico, Enes, Slater (Moss 75), Lyons (A Griffiths 46), T Cranney, S Cranney (Snyder 60), R Griffiths, M Langdon.

Canberra Cosmos: Konstantinou, Milan (Hamilton 86), Popovich, Purdue (Hooker 67), Polak, Watkins (De Jesus 74), Castro, Arranz, James, Clark, Winnie.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0

CARLTON SC 0

Venue: Breakers Stadium. Crowd: 5,735. Referee: E Lennie.

Cautions: Roberts (NB) 15, Buonavoglia (NB) 29, Lapsansky (C) 65, Markovski (C) 89.

Red Cards: Roberts (NB) 36.

Teams: **Newcastle Breakers:** Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, Sprod, Dodd Smith 61, Wilson (Tancheski 85), Buonavoglia, Owens (Wieczorek 72), Moore, Harper, Ferguson.

Carlton SC: Anastasiadis, McPherson, Colosimo, Douglas (Deans 87), Marth, Atkinson, Moriera (Packer 60), Lapsansky, Thompson, Markovski, Horvat.

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 3
(Vargas 26 & 73, Hutchinson 30)

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2
(Kelic 10, Urlovic 85)

Venue: Falcons Stadium. Crowd: 2,055. Referee: J Blaney.

Cautions: Gotis (GF) 31, Abbas (MK) 50, A Vargas (GF) 75.

Teams: **Gippsland Falcons:** Jevdjovic, Fak, Gotis, A. Vargas, Hutchinson, Savage, Puca (Sekulovski 68), Bell, MacNicol, Nilo (Mandic 90).

Melbourne Knights: Acevski, Rajher, Kovacevic, Nastevski, Zold (Slavkos 57), Kiratzoglou, Abbas (Magdic 77), R. Vargas, Cervinski, Pelikan, Kelic (Urlovic 68).

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 2
(Petrovski 17 & 57)

BRISBANE STRIKERS 2
(North 85, Foster 95)

Venue: Brandon Park. Crowd: 5,253. Referee: S Micallef.

Cautions: McLaren (BS) 59.

Teams: **Wollongong Wolves:** Pogliacomini, Ceccolli, Stanton, Cervinski, Horsley, Young (Masi 74), Chipperfield, Spencer (Reid 74), Petrovski, Robertson (Huxley 91), Mennillo.

Brisbane Strikers: Bolton, Gwynne, Stefanutto, Foster, Srhoj, Hews (Miner 74), Dwyer (Pilic 63), McLaren, North, Grierson, McKain (Webber 74).

ROUND THIRTY-TWO

Tuesday April 25: Adelaide City Force vs Gippsland Hindmarsh Stadium 8pm, Canberra vs Auckland Bruce Stadium 3pm, Brisbane vs Northern Spirit Suncorp Stadium 7pm, Parramatta vs Wollongong Parramatta Stadium 7.30pm, Perth vs Sydney Olympic Perth Oval 4pm, Carlton SC vs South Melbourne Olympic Park 7.30pm, Sydney United vs Newcastle Sydney United SC 4pm, Melbourne Knights vs Marconi Knights Stadium 3pm.

ROUND THIRTY-THREE

Friday April 28: Auckland Kingz vs Brisbane Strikers North Harbour Stadium 7pm, Newcastle Breakers vs South Melbourne Breakers Stadium 7.30pm, Northern Spirit vs Parramatta Power North Sydney Oval 7.30pm.

Saturday April 29: Gippsland Falcons vs Canberra Cosmos Falcons Stadium 7pm.

Sunday April 30: Melbourne Knights vs Sydney United Knights Stadium 3pm, Sydney Olympic vs Carlton SC Belmore SG 6.30pm, Wollongong Wolves vs Perth Glory Brandon Park 6.30pm, Marconi Stallions vs Adelaide City Force Marconi Stadium 6pm.

(All times provided are local times)